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A Fuddy Thesis:
Directing David Lindsay-Abaire's *Fuddy Meers*

By
Dustin M. Mosko

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Theatre Arts
Under the Supervision of Professor Virginia Smith
Lincoln, Nebraska

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A Fuddy Thesis:
Directing David Lindsay-Abaire's *Fuddy Meers*

Dustin M. Mosko, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2017

Advisor: Virginia Smith

This thesis contains the written documentation of the process of directing a theatrical production of *Fuddy Meers* by David Lindsay-Abaire, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Fine Arts in Directing for Stage and Screen at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Topics addressed include play selection, script analysis, concept development, casting, production & rehearsal processes, director's reflection, and critical responses of the production.

“Your memory is a monster; you forget it doesn’t. It simply files things away. It keeps things from you –and summons them to your recall with a will all its own. You think you have a memory, but it has you.” -John Irving, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*

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I. Play Selection Process

I learned many lessons during the process of proposing plays for the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film's 2016-17 season. It was useful to have studied the assortment of plays I encountered both before and during my enrollment at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. My study of those plays provided me with a deeper depth of knowledge in periods, styles, genres, and playwrights.

It was both fortunate and unfortunate that several rounds of play proposals were unsuccessful. Although it was frustrating at the time it was during the play proposal process that I experienced a significant learning breakthrough: know your audience. I based my initial play submissions on my own interest along with the statistical information about who the ultimate audience watching the play might be. I knew the audience was to consist predominately of undergraduate non-theatre majors, whose ages ranged between 18 and perhaps 22. I had not, however, considered my initial audience, who was my advisor; Professor Virginia Smith, who was essentially acting as a filter for the play selection committee. In reflection, I understand that these decisions were based on the big picture to include the season line up as well as the interests and capabilities of the Johnny Carson School.

Upon reaching the end of the list of plays I was interested in directing without a single successful submission of the three required, I had another learning breakthrough in this thesis project: read more. It became evident that although I carried with me an assorted wish list of

plays to direct, I had reached the bottom of that list without success. I found myself therefore unprepared to accomplish the task of pitching a thesis stage production. After ordering dozens of scripts as well as scouring library shelves, I learned the hard way that no matter how many plays I have read, that number will not be sufficient. Building an arsenal of productions to pitch thus became essential to my growth as a professional director in the future.

I learned from these breakthroughs and achieved the goal of successfully submitting three play proposals for the JCSTF's 2016-17 Season by the October 15, 2015 deadline. These approved plays were *Assistance* by Leslye Headland, *Hand to God* by Robert Askins, and *Fuddy Meers* by David Lindsay-Abaire (Appendix A).

I chose Headland's *Assistance* because of its fast-paced dialogue, simple unit set, age appropriate characters for our college actors, and its accessible situation. The producers of Askins' *Hand to God* announced the end of their extended Broadway run during my search. I was extremely interested in the play for its content and humorous approach to a dramatic situation, but I also knew that obtaining the rights would be nearly impossible.

I previously directed a scene from Lindsay-Abaire's *Good People* in one of Professor Smith's advanced directing classes and thought that we shared an interest in his style of writing. I knew that *Good People* would not work as my thesis at this school in particular due to age differences between the characters and the student actors, but the engaging story and realistic dialogue sparked my interest to research further into the playwright's work. I read Lindsay-Abaire's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Rabbit Hole* next and found the play engaging, but I was not ready to

tackle the subject matter of losing a child, nor do I think it would have been the right choice for our audience.

I then discovered and read *Fuddy Meers*, which proved to be a perfect mix of what I was looking for in a thesis play. As a bonus, the script included a character with a hilarious puppet alter ego (eerily similar to the one in *Hand to God*). My inquiries revealed that the Johnny Carson School had never mounted *Fuddy Meers* nor could I find evidence that of a community production in Lincoln within the past decade. *Fuddy Meers* quickly became my third successful and most preferred submission due to its suspenseful plot and laugh out loud situations, dialogue and characters.

On January 25, 2016, the JCSTF Season Selection Committee offered me the opportunity of directing *Fuddy Meers* on the main stage as my thesis production. Professor Harris Smith also informed me that I was to open the season in October 2016, and concomitantly received my venue of choice, the Studio Theater in UNL City Campus' historic Temple Building, built in 1911 with a grant from John D. Rockefeller.

II. David Lindsay-Abaire

David Abaire (he added "Lindsay" to his surname after marrying actress Christine Lindsay) is a South Boston, MA native who won a scholarship at age twelve to attend Milton Academy. Abaire excelled in athletics as a member of the school wrestling team but quit after deciding to audition for his ninth-grade theatre production. Known as the "funny one" by his peers, he was

also a gifted writer, composing his junior and senior year plays before graduating from high school.

Abaire entered playwriting festivals soon after graduating from Sarah Lawrence College and won a competition sponsored by Trustus Theatre in Columbia, SC. At the award ceremony, fellow participant Stephen Belber approached Abaire with the advice that he should apply to Juilliard, one of the leading theatre academies in the United States. When Abaire scoffed at the ability to afford it, he was shocked to learn that the program was free of cost to the few whom Juilliard accepts each year.

It wasn't long before Mr. Abaire applied, gained acceptance, and enrolled in one of the most well-known playwriting programs in the United States, namely the Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program. While in attendance, Abaire honed his craft under the guidance of professional playwrights Marsha Norman, *'night Mother*, and Christopher Durang, *A History of the American Film*, which happened to be the first play that Abaire performed in 9th grade at Milton Academy.

Each week the participants of the Wallace program were expected to turn in ten pages of a script which Juilliard acting students studied and performed. Upon its completion, the Juilliard School developed and produced *Fuddy Meers*. It thereafter moved on for additional polishing and structuring among the professional actors at the National Playwrights Festival at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre for a staged reading in Waterford, Connecticut in 1998.

The play premiered Off-Broadway at the Manhattan Theatre Club's New York City Center-Stage II on West 55th Street in New York. It ran for 166 performances in 1999 over a span of eight weeks, then transferred to the Minetta Lane Theatre in Greenwich Village, closing in 2000 after 78 performances there. The New York Times' Mel Gussow called the play a "dark, sweet, and thoroughly engaging comedy," a kind of abused-woman-at-the-crossroads tale" in the shape of a wise-cracking self-conscious dysfunctional family comedy." In London, the play premiered at the Arts Theatre in 2004, as a co-production with the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. In both venues, it ran for four weeks.

Abaire has been successful with his professional endeavors in both playwriting and screenwriting since *Fuddy Meers* professional debut. His most notable works are his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Rabbit Hole* and its successful screen adaptation, *Good People*, *Shrek! The Musical*, *Robots* and *Kimberly Akimbo*. He is presently the new co-director of the Lila Acheson Wallace playwriting program at Juilliard.

III. **FUDDY MEERS**

David Lindsay-Abaire completed the program at Juilliard and staked the beginning of his professional career on *Fuddy Meers*, but it didn't happen without a struggle. The Minetta Lane Theatre refused to produce the play unless the playwright change the confusing title. Abaire refused, arguing that the title was "everything he wanted the play to be." Despite his belief in the play and its title, the play was going nowhere after its development at the O'Neill Center. He waited for about 18 months before he got an offer from the Manhattan Theatre Club.

Lynee Meadow, the long-time artistic director of The Manhattan Theatre Club, along with Barry Grove, the MTC's Executive Producer, agreed to give the play a well-budgeted production, hiring an accomplished director to stage it. He was David Petrarca, who had extensive experience at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, where he had staged eight mainstage shows. The set and costume designer was Santo Loquasto, one of the most accomplished designers in New York, having worked on Broadway and Off-Broadway for over forty years and the winner of three Tony Awards. The lighting designer was by Brian Mac Devitt, who at the time was a "rising" designer with several regional credits, but he has since won three Tony Award for his lighting.; the sound designer was Bruce Ellman, and Meadow hired the composer Jason Robert Brown to write original music. She completed the production staff with fight director Rick Sordelet and production stage manager Thea Bradshaw Gillies.

The cast was as follows:

<i>Claire</i>	J. Smith-Cameron
<i>Richard</i>	Robert Stanton
Kenny	Keith Nobbs
Limping Man	Patrick Breen
Gertie	Marylouise Burke
Millet	Mark McKinney
Heidi	Lisa Grolitsky

Abaire's critical response to the first professional staging of his play was that it became "everything I hoped it could be and more. The stars aligned and it seemed every collaborator understood the play and knew where I was coming from (I believe the consensus was from

Mars). They collectively embraced the strange and wacky world of *Fuddy Meers* in a great big theatrical bear-hug. They understood the play could be whimsical and silly, and still be very real and painful at its center. They knew to temper the sweetness with a dull edge. The tonal shifts in the play can make for a very tricky line to walk, but my collaborators walked it expertly.”

The premiere received positive reviews from many theatre critics. John Heilpern of the *New York Observer* called Abaire “some kind of comic genius,” exclaiming “Praise be for *Fuddy Meers*, the insane farce at Manhattan. . . .This exciting new dramatist has an original mind. . . . *Fuddy Meers* surprises us all the way to the nuthouse.” *NY Times* Ben Brantley critiqued *Fuddy Meers* as “a dark, sweet, and thoroughly engaging comedy that introduces a brilliant new playwright. Like the resourceful chef who turns leftovers into haute cuisine, Mr. Abaire blends clichéd ingredients into something savory and distinctive. . . . Heady fun...fresh, zingy dialogue.”

On January 27, 2000, *Fuddy Meers* transferred into the Minetta Lane Theatre for an extended run (with title intact). The Manhattan Theatre Club remained the producer and the production staff remained the same as the premiere, but director Petrarca needed to make a few casting changes. Lisa Gurlitsky’s pregnancy began to show and Mark McKinney went on tour with the Canadian comedy troupe called Kids in the Hall, so two new actors stepped in and brought a new spin to the play. Abaire said of the change, “John Christopher Jones made Millet an earnest and hilariously sweet misfit,” and “in Clea Lewis’ hands, Heidi became one of the pluckiest, sexiest sirens to ever step into a uniform.” [1]

IV. Script Analysis

Setting

As Abaïre does not specify the setting in the play, the Johnny Carson production team reached the conclusion that *Fuddy Meers* would take place near Piermont, New York, U.S.A. on May 15, 1978, from sunrise to sunset. We agreed that the funhouse attraction at the Piermont Fair is essential to the plot of the play, because the Fair is the place where Claire blacked out after assaulting Philip. The location is also important because the photograph that Gertie shows Claire is the reflection of her brother Zach in the funhouse mirrors. After researching these facts, the production team found that the Piermont Fair discussed in the dialogue in the play was a traveling carnival that had its peak in the 1940s.

While discussing the timeline of the play, the design team concluded that if Claire attended the carnival during the late 1930s with her family, then married around the age of seventeen and got pregnant with Kenny almost immediately, she would be close to 40 years old in 1978. The time frame also worked in the concept as the MRI machine that Richard mentions several times was a major invention introduced to the American people in 1977. The vehicle scenes, especially that of Act One Scene Four, also make a lot of sense if placed in the late 1970s as Kenny smokes marijuana and listens to “70s easy listening” on the radio.

I must note that we as a team missed an obvious curve ball while collaborating on the setting, and I take full responsibility for not catching the mistake. Three weeks into rehearsals Shannon, our ASM asked, “Who is Rodney King?” During a break after act one scene four, I told

her about the incident that took place in 1992 and received one of Claire's "Aha!" moments myself. The setting we established in the concept was in the late 1970s. I blame myself for that oversight. I analyzed it well ahead of time but I missed a detail during our collaboration that may have caused a distraction for the audience. As it turned out, my casting of Aguel Lual covered it perfectly, because she, as a young black woman, was having a Rodney King experience onstage. It proved to be hilarious. On the positive side, our 1970s concept was irrelevant, because Claire's reality was fantastical as it was distorted. She could be stuck in the 1970s no matter what year it was for everyone around her. We were well into the build process so I did not see any reason for a complete overhaul of our concept. And anyway, Gertie's house and the so-called car we ended up using had no connection to any time period. In the end, I do not believe anyone in the audience noticed the oversight.

Previous Action

After Claire's brother Zach suffered from a fatal fall while climbing a tree, things began to go badly for the protagonist's family. Claire's father died suddenly leaving her mother, Gertie, in mourning. Claire met and married the rebellious bad boy, Philip, became pregnant, gave birth to Kenny and raised him under her protection for 13 years all the while suffering from relentless domestic abuse from her husband.

The complicating factor for the play's subsequent events took place on Kenny's 13th birthday when Philip struck his son in front of Claire. Later that morning, Claire told Kenny to go out to the car then poured hot bacon grease into the ear and down the side of her sleeping husband's face. The protective mother then retreated with Kenny to the Piermont Fair, a family

birthday tradition, and collapsed into a coma after entering the funhouse attraction she and her brother enjoyed in their childhood.

In a nearby town around the same time as the bacon grease incident, Richard Fiffle fell in love with a woman named Polly Harkness and wanted to marry her, but unfortunately, he didn't have any prospects of stability to offer. To compensate for the misfortune, Richard assaulted a local school principal, stole her ring, and offered it to Polly as a symbol of engagement. Polly rejected the proposal because the ring had blood on it and Richard was forced to flee for his safety. Richard stopped his flight in nearby Piermont and landed himself a job as an MRI technician.

Police took Millet, an unemployed janitor, into custody and charged him with aggravated assault on his former boss, Principal Leone, after Richard Fiffle's crime. The prosecuting attorney established the motive of Millet's crime as retribution for his recent termination. Testimony of the janitor's co-workers established a pattern of Millet complimenting the principal's ring, which was stolen after the assault. The prosecutors also brought in an expert medical examiner who testified that Millet suffered from mental lapses that impaired his ability to control his actions or remember them afterward, and therefore proved that he was capable of committing the crime. The court appointed attorney failed to provide an alibi or favorable witness on his client's account, and so a jury convicted Millet and a judge sentenced him to time in prison.

Philip burned down their home in retribution for Claire's attack and is arrested for arson. Gertie testified as a key character witness against her son-in-law, whose injuries from

the assault left him limping and lisping. Philip was found guilty and sentenced to time in prison. The stress from Claire's medical state along with the pressure of testifying against Philip took its toll on Gertie, and she suffered a stroke that left her aphasic and unable to communicate effectively or care for her grandson.

Claire awoke in the hospital without her memory and was diagnosed with a form of psychogenic amnesia the doctors believed had trauma as its basis. Each day Claire awoke in the hospital's long term care unit without any memory of the past. Kenny did his best to demonstrate concern for his mother and his aphasic grandmother, but the routine became too much for the dyslexic teen. He became a drug abuser.

Richard interacted with Claire regularly while performing his job at the hospital and fell in love with her. He convinced an apathetic Kenny and helpless Gertie to bless a marriage in order to provide the home and care that the boy and his mother desperately required. After several elaborate attempts to make enough of an impression to marry Claire in the span of a day, Richard was finally successful. Once legally married, Claire and Kenny were relocated to Richard's home and a routine was established to ease the stress of Claire's condition.

Millet and Philip did their best to reform themselves into productive members of society during their prison stint. Philip attended anger management classes and began writing poetry. Millet, withdrawing into himself, created an alter ego in the form of a hand puppet named Hinky Binky in order to protect himself. On one such occasion, Millet and Hinky Binky were surrounded by inmates in the yard and Philip intervened to save the comedic duo. As punishment for the disturbance, Millet and Philip were handcuffed together and placed on

extra kitchen duty under prison cafeteria worker Heidi's supervision. In time, Philip seduced Heidi and recruited her assistance. Together the new team planned an escape to Canada.

The Moment Before

Early this morning, Heidi laced the guards' food with sleeping pills and set Millet and Philip free. Millet went into town to gather supplies, Heidi stole a guard's uniform along with a state corrections vehicle in order to set up a fake road block, and Philip broke into Richard's home in order to tie up loose ends with Claire. Clueless to Philip's presence, Richard prepares Claire's cup of coffee while Kenny smokes a joint getting ready for school. Gertie, isolated in her country home, makes tea.

Stasis & Intrusion

The stasis in *Fuddy Meers* is that Claire has a form of psychogenic amnesia that completely wipes away her memory each time she falls asleep. Today is different from every other day because Claire witnesses Richard harm Kenny when he places him into a wrist lock for taking twenty dollars from her purse. After seeing this violent act, Claire begins to act peculiarly by recalling memories from her past, such as the name Philip and information about traumatic experiences, to which Richard says has never happened before. I believe this action to be the internal intrusion for the character of Claire. The precipitating circumstance of the play, which sets every subsequent event into motion, is when Philip kidnaps Claire and physically removes her from the controlled environment of Richard's home.

Central Dramatic Conflict

Claire's memory is distorted with a dark and troublesome past. As the protagonist's psychological break occurred in the Piermont Fair's funhouse, the key to curing Claire's amnesia is to revisit the traumatic events that occurred and accept the actions she has performed in the past. Externally, the central dramatic conflict is Philip's attempt to escape responsibility for his actions in his previous relationship with Claire.

Dialogue- Choice of Words

Since there are already many communication barriers (such as Philip's speech impediment and Gertie's aphasia), the playwright keeps the word choice of the play very simple and efficient to keep the action both dynamic and comprehensible. This simplicity contributes to Abaire's phraseology, which is short and specific in most cases, especially when describing tangible items. This writing technique is analogous to the process of recalling individual memories, as our brains function by attaching a memory and emotional response to the items we have encountered in the past. For example, the yellow hat, the red handled hacksaw, and Kenny's blue sweater are all items that trigger Claire's memories in *Fuddy Meers*. Abaire uses these items as keys for Claire to unlock the attached memories and visual clues for the audience to solve the mystery of Claire's past.

Dramatic Action (Triggers & Heaps)

I created a list of "triggers and heaps," which are causal connections between successive domino-like progressions of events. I distributed the list to all of the cast and crew early in the process. (Appendix B). The attached document assisted us in understanding the actions of the

play without getting bogged down on interpretation of mood, emotion, or the literal meaning of the purposely confusing dialogue. The cast and crew agreed that actions define characters, so we focused on actions first and foremost.

Character Analysis

My previous employment as an Engagement Coordinator at Centre College's Norton Center for the Arts taught me the power of Microsoft Excel when organizing, collaborating, and sharing information. Through these experiences, I found that spreadsheets assist in keeping users selective and more precise with the words they enter due to limited spacing concerns. These forms assisted the cast during "table work" to help everyone become familiar with the script. "Table-work" is a purposely vague and somewhat artsy term for imagination-centered activity. In most cases, a director will simply sit with actors—sometimes at a table, sometimes not—and go through the script in search of clues, hints, or inferences, with everybody keeping their creative ears open for unintentional or random bits of insight, inspiration, or even revelation. Everybody takes time to weigh the words, their meanings, their sounds, and then explores the various possibilities that the words suggest. During the table work period of our rehearsals, the cast collaborated in creating the attached character analysis spreadsheet and relationships chart (Appendix C).

Meaning of the Title

Fuddy Meers is Gertie's aphasiac phrasing for the carnival's house of mirrors, or funny mirrors. The production team agreed that the reveal of the house of mirrors is a crucial

moment in the play as it opens a locked compartment of Claire’s forgotten memories and sets her on the path to discovery and acceptance.

Philosophical Statements

Limping Man
Thum things are better left forgotten.

Claire
I don’t know that that’s true.

Human beings are a product of their memories. From learning the hard way that a stove is hot to recalling the smell of a parent’s cologne, if a memory is lost so too is the experience gained from the event. This is the reason many of us hoard possessions, not for the tangible items we collect, but because of the memory attached to the item itself. Relationships are also formed through time and built on the memories of shared experiences both positive and negative. The playwright builds on this knowledge and questions whether or not some memories from our lives are better left forgotten, even at the expense of repeating the same mistakes all over again.

V. Concept Development

Fuddy Meers’ Student Production Team

Director	Dustin M. Mosko
Set Designer	Lisa Haldeman
Props Master	Lisa Haldeman
Lighting Designer	Sheric Hull
Costume Designer	Rebecca Armstrong
Sound Designer	Araceli Ramirez

Faculty Advisor

Virginia Smith
J.D. Madsen
J.D. Madsen
Laurel Shoemaker
Janice Stauffer
Jeff O’Brian

Composer	Jack Rodenburg	NA
Digital Media Designer	Zack Trout	Steve Kolbe
Stage Manager	Riley Redburn	Brad Buffum
Technical Director	Brendan Greene-Walsh	Mitchell Critel

One of the many reasons I pursued graduate school was to develop further my ability to collaborate with a design team. In my previous experiences, I always felt the responsibility to analyze the script, research, and present a vision or overall concept to the production team. This responsibility included providing a visual metaphor for the setting, sound and image samples, a list of production concerns, and additionally providing leading questions for the designers to have a starting point to begin research and development for their specific areas.

Although I had already pitched a concept statement to the season selection committee and had a concept packet ready to distribute to the production team, I was approached by the Head of the Design and Technology Department Professor Laurel Shoemaker with the request that I modify my directing technique. Instead of entering into the process completely prepared and leading the charge, I was challenged to walk into our first meeting with only the same script as everyone else in order to truly collaborate with my colleagues. I accepted the challenge whole invited two members of the design faculty, Mitch Critel (Technical Direction) and J.D. Madsen (Scenic Design) to sit on this thesis committee to ensure that I remained honest as a collaborative director throughout the production's design and build process.

Once our concept meetings began in March 2016, I felt unusually awkward as I tiptoed around being too specific during our initial discussions for fear of sharing my insight

prematurely. It was evident that I was not the only one feeling uneasy as many of the designers were reluctant to contribute many fresh ideas to the concept conversation during our first production meeting.

After our second production meeting, I felt as if we were spinning our wheels without a lot of progress toward a unified production concept. When I began to second guess my decision to go along with the department's request, I thought of a quote that I wrote down and posted above my desk during my first year of graduate school from Anne Bogart's book *and then, you act*. It read, "You cannot create results. You can only create conditions in which something might happen." Just below that quote is a second from the same book, "If you cannot find the words to describe what you are attempting, point at it." [2]

Taking this advice to heart along with the gentle nudge from my directing advisor to lead future meetings with a firmer hand, I created a document entitled "Puzzles and Riddles" that included all of the thoughts that we discussed during our first two meetings. I then placed the document into a shared electronic storage box and encouraged the team to collaborate on the form. (Appendix D)

In reflection, I believe that I could have phrased many of these questions differently to allow more opportunity for opinion and discussion, since there was little activity by way of written discussion from the designers. However, this attempt was successful, because our next meeting produced monumental results toward our progress in creating the production concept. The designers all had fresh ideas and the conversation was easily managed to keep everyone working toward a collaborative concept. After agreeing on the overall production design

concept, style, and a theatrical element as a hook for continuity and clarity purposes, we departed on the agreement to continue making individual discoveries and share that research in our future production meetings.

Overall Production Concept

Claire, a sunny amnesiac, awakes each morning without any recollection of the previous day and must interact with her environment in order solve the mystery of her distorted past. Day after day she is stuck in the same loop of making discoveries and then forgetting them each night as she sleeps.

Dramatic Action and Pacing

The production design's focus was to portray Claire trapped in a carnival attraction within her own mind. In order to achieve this effect, we strove to create an environment of constant action that incorporated the scene transitions as part of the action. This environment included a unified decision to delete the script's suggested intermission in order to build and maintain the show's momentum.

Style

The production team agreed on the term "fantastical realism." The side effects of psychogenic amnesia confuse Claire's 1978 surroundings with fantastical memories of a childhood visit to a carnival in 1938. More specifically, Claire's environment is real but her amnesia creates the illusion that she is trapped in her past.

Recurring Theatrical Element

Claire's moments of discovery, or "Aha!" moments took place both visually and audibly for the audience at the precise instances they occurred. When Claire is rewarded with a sensory memory so too was our audience rewarded with theatrical effects.

VI. Production Process

A. Set Design

Set Design Development

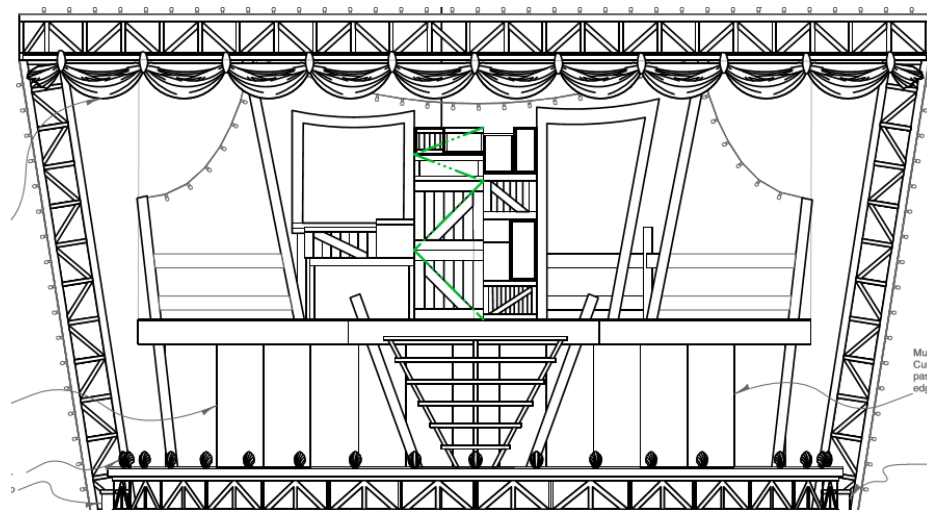
I had the pleasure of collaborating with Lisa Haldeman, a M.F.A. Theatre Design candidate at the JCSTF, as the production designer for my second-year film *Places!* and was excited to have her assigned as the set designer for *Fuddy Meers*. I was also looking forward to working with J.D. Madsen, Assistant Professor of Set Design, who was acting as the set design faculty advisor for this production.

Lisa Haldeman proved to be an invaluable part of the concept and design process. It was truly amazing to see the set design transform from week to week. The designer arrived in our first meeting prepared to pitch ideas and concept sketches. So much so, that I was concerned that the designer may have had preconceived ideas about the production before we began, but that was not the case. I felt these ideas were acceptable from the beginning, but I also felt that everyone on the team should have the opportunity to line up at the starting point together if that was indeed to be my challenge.

The first series of set sketches were baffling to me because the designs changed so very drastically from week to week. The numerous changes created a bit of communication barrier between us. It got to the point where Claire was not the only one facing a fantastical realism environment; at times when I was listening to the set designer speak, I simply could not grasp any notion of her words' meaning. I could not determine whether the problem was a deficiency in the designer's ability to express herself or my inability to understand her. In any case, I was always interested in watching the process develop. In my previous experiences, I have not been fortunate enough to work with a designer who was so willing to go back to the drawing board and start from scratch on their own without a request or suggestion to do so from the production team.

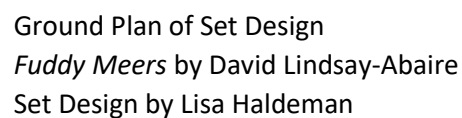
The *Fuddy Meers* design evolved from a massive abstract tree with picture frames entangled in its roots, to a realistic box set full of sharp angles and heavy beams, to its final form as a warped representation of a carnival side show attraction (Appendix E).

Final Set Design



Front View of Set Design
Fuddy Meers by David Lindsay-Abaire
Set Design by Lisa Haldeman

Ground Plan



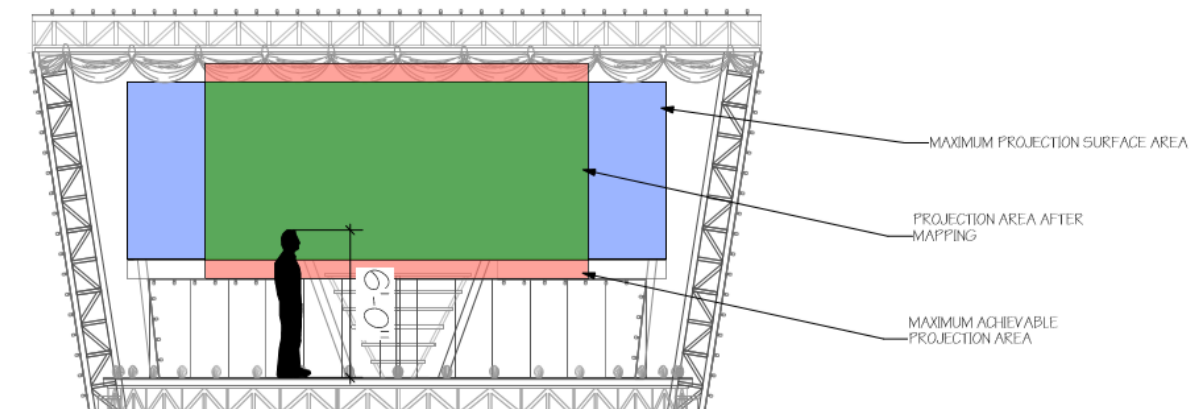
My initial concerns for the set design lay in the necessity of masking the actors and crew when the audiences were not to see them, finding entrances and exits other than the single door that had been provided, the car scenes, transitions from one scene to the next, projection surfaces, and most importantly audience sight lines.

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Throughout our conception and design process I continually requested that the set's design allow for quick scene progression in order to maintain our audience's attention during transitions. The designer took my words to heart, along with my advice that we keep the show in constant motion (especially during the four scenes that take place in a traveling vehicle) by designing a donut revolve that operated independently of the stage proper.

Regrettably, the revolve's actual capabilities were completely unknown until we approached our scheduled technical rehearsals. Due to the production's *raison d'être* as a learning environment, I understood the need to remain flexible and accept the inevitable, but I could not finalize the show's blocking without knowing the set's operating capabilities.

Projection Surface/ Drop Curtain



Projection Surface/ Drop Curtain
Fuddy Meers by David Lindsay-Abaire
Set Design by Lisa Haldeman
Digital Media Technician – Maxx Finn

It is a department requirement that the M.F.A. Directing thesis production include multi-media or cinematic elements into a live theatre performance. I knew of this requirement from

the beginning of the process as did the production team and their advisors. I intellectually support infusing film elements into a theatre production and remained optimistic in undertaking a multi-media challenge at the JCSTF. My optimism had prompted the incorporation of multi-media elements into my second year Theatrix production in 2015, *Mary's Wedding* by Stephen Massicotte.

I do not agree, however, that any theatre production should be required to include a specific technical element that the playwright had not originally specified as a necessity. During this thesis project, I found that the attempt to force a technical element into a live theatre performance, even with the best of intentions, eroded the level of collaboration and created a dam that hindered creativity during the design process. This kind of insistence on a superfluous scenic element is especially harmful if a designer resists the technical element's inclusion from the very beginning of the design process.

We listed the projection requirement and therefore the need for projection surfaces as a priority early in the process, but as the project progressed I couldn't help but feel that the set designer was excluding or ignoring the requirement. I did my best to reiterate the importance of departmental requirements for the project during our weekly meetings, but it became obvious, to me at least, that a multi-media component had never been a priority for the set designer.

In my opinion, the projection surface's color and material (red and yellow painted canvas) wasn't successful as a design component, and it did not provide a suitable surface to reflect a clear projected image for the audience. When we originally collaborated on the design for the

canvas drop we discussed a more suitable projection surface. I also inquired about the curtains' physical capabilities, but the details of how the curtains would be operated during the transitions was still questionable as we entered into the build process. (Appendix H).

B. Technical Direction

I did my best to stay out of the difficulties that the students working in the scene shop encountered. I never doubted we would have complications with such an ambitious design. Knowing this probability of complications ahead of time, I scheduled and rehearsed in a space outside of the Studio Theatre for a majority of the build process.

I had faith that our technical director, M.F.A. Theatre Design candidate Brendan Greene-Walsh, and his faculty advisor Assistant Professor of Practice- Theatre Technology Mitchell Critel were doing everything in their power to keep the set's construction on schedule. As we closed in on our scheduled technical rehearsals it became apparent that the additional time needed to complete the set was going to affect the cast and crew's ability to work out the transitions. Most importantly, the actors would not have sufficient time to rehearse on the moving stage, which was crucially important to the play's action. The revolve was also an important concern from a physical safety standpoint.

In a production meeting, a few weeks prior to technical rehearsals I felt time was becoming a factor so I asked technical director Brendan Greene-Walsh for a date to begin rehearsing on the revolve. He told me that even if the revolve was functional, the cast could not rehearse on it until technical rehearsals. The reason, he said, was that the operator of the

machinery needed certification and he could not train an operator until the week we were scheduled to open. When I followed up with the request that the operator's training take place earlier and attend rehearsals I received a firm negative response.

I know that the designers and I were in agreement about the concept because we had met for five hours to plan out in painstaking manner each transition sequence together (Appendix E). We all knew how important these transitions were to the production and that these elements needed additional rehearsal time outside of techs. Again, I received a firm negative response to my inquiry.

Brendan nevertheless consoled me with his effort to push ahead to construct and install the set's second tier earlier than expected. This effort was very accommodating to the cast and me, because it allowed us to re-block the stage combat in a very tight and potentially dangerous space before tech rehearsals began.

C. Properties

The props in *Fuddy Meers* are equally important as the set itself. As discussed in the script analysis portion of this thesis, the properties allow Claire a step-by-step integration into the plot by virtue of her recalled memories associated with the properties. These props are the physical breadcrumbs, or clues, that trigger Claire's actions throughout the play.

When I learned that the set designer assumed the role of props master for *Fuddy Meers* in addition to the scenic design, a red flag immediately went up in my directorial early warning

system. It was a question of time. No matter how talented a designer might be, there just wouldn't be enough hours during the design and build process to accomplish both tasks.

We knew that several props needed specific design attributes, and building them was to require even more time and attention to detail that might detract from the set design during the build process. To complicate the props situation further, several weapons needed engineered to ensure actor safety during stage combat sequences. Two examples included a shovel that made physical contact with an actor's head and a gun that needed to fire. There were also the unresolved questions about the car and boxes, and how they were to function onstage.

There was not a point in this process where any of us, advisors included, were unaware of how big the challenge was for our shop to build this show in the timeframe allotted in the production schedule. I personally did not think it would be humanly possible to take on both the set design and props master positions for this production and voiced my concern. Lisa, with the support of her advisor J. D. Madsen, assured me that she was capable of accomplishing both tasks on time. Unfortunately, she was in error and my own misgivings came to fruition.

During the design process, I believe that the designer was understandably overwhelmed in her attempt to balance both of her positions on the production team and maintain her studies while enrolled in full time graduate coursework. I am not surprised that the prop design suffered as a result. The props master shared a packet of images for each of the props required for the production and provided the cast with rehearsal props during our first week of blocking.

A major recurring complaint from the cast was that the rehearsal props lacked any similarity to the shape or weight of the item they were going to use in the production itself. For example: If a shovel is needed onstage for several stage combat situations that requires an actor to strike another actor over the head with it, why would a props master provide the actors with a spade handle with a floppy cardboard head that didn't resemble or feel anything like a shovel? If an actress says "red handled hacksaw" and must wave it above her head while threatening to saw off another actor's arm, why would she be asked to do so with a skinny bent piece of metal that has no resemblance to the weight or feel of the actual weapon because it lacks a handle? If four scenes of the play take place in a vehicle, why wait until technical rehearsals to begin the car's design and build? Finally, why would the set designer provide the director with a scale model to plan blocking and then introduce fully built stage props that were twice the size of the blocks in the model and therefore counterproductive to the concept as a whole?

I believe the answer lies in the graduate student's over-extension as designer. As the director, I should have taken a firmer stand and followed my gut instincts when I learned that the set designer must tackle the role of the props master in a show of this complexity. In the future, I won't make the same mistake twice, although in retrospect it is clear that I had no influence in the matter, and even if I did wield such influence I doubt that I, as a graduate director, could have engaged a separate props master.

D. Costume Design

We began the *Fuddy Meers* design process with guest artist costume designer, Nancy Konrardy. I was impressed with her passion, and she set a great example for the student designers during our initial meetings. She had invested thought and research into developing the production's design concept. Conversely, there were several times when I felt she needed to defend her opinions rather than discuss them with the design team. In order to address this dilemma, I spoke to the group as a whole with a request that we all remain open to each other's questions and ideas.

I believe that our design concept for the entire production would have turned out much differently if the designer had stayed on the team as she is undoubtedly creative, talented and outspoken. Unluckily, she stopped attending our production meetings and her communication with me was vague, noncommittal, and confusing at best during the next month of the process. When I re-emphasized the importance of her presence in our weekly meetings, the costume designer took it personally and lashed out through an email reply followed by yet another week of silence.

I have concluded that our first costume designer overcommitted to the *Fuddy* project and needed any excuse she could find to get off the hook of responsibility for bailing out on a project already in progress. By the end of the unnecessary drama, her successful filibuster concluded with an emailed resignation just as we were completing the spring semester. Due to the setback, we entered into the dark period of summer without a costume designer.

The tabled costume design was in stasis until July when Prof. Janice Stauffer assigned Rebecca Armstrong, an incoming first year M.F.A. Theatre Design candidate, to the team. As the costume designer already lived in the Lincoln area it allowed for us to meet, discuss the play, our overall design concept, and the costume design over the remainder of the summer. We discussed each of the characters in depth and agreed upon the costume design concept of 1970s costumes incorporating some aspect of a 1938 carnival worker. For example, Richard may be wearing a butterfly collar silk button up from the 1970s but might he also wear the pants, jacket, bow tie or top hat of a big top ringleader?

After taking a pause in our discussions so that the costume designer could research further, we later met and agreed that Claire would have elements of a trapeze artist, Richard a ringleader, Gertie a fortune teller, Kenny a snake oil merchant, Millet a clown, Heidi as a lion tamer, and finally Philip's costume would include elements of a freak show attraction due to his scarring. The set designer's concept photographs referred both to fashions of the 1970s and to carnival costumes of the late 1930s. At the time of our agreement we were behind schedule, so I did not ask for completed costume renderings since the designer was convinced she would be able to pull the show without building any of the costumes. Research samples and photographs for the costume design are found in (Appendix G).

Costume Build

The costume designer was able to accomplish her goal of pulling the show from UNL's costume storage without building any pieces, but I am unsure how beneficial this procedure was except for budgetary purposes. Throughout the build process I visited the costume shop to

sort through and pull items with her, which was helpful to both of us as we were able to discuss the costume design outside of the time restricted production meetings. Although there were some great finds, such as a squirrel and mushroom printed button-up shirt that happened to fit the actor playing Philip perfectly, I began to worry that we were drifting off course from our original intention of infusing a carnival element into our costumes to highlight the overall concept.

The costume designer and I discussed this concern but I may have been either unclear with the concept from the beginning or I may have confused her to some degree during the process. Her concept art included pictures of the carnival counterparts so I assumed we were going to include them, but I think she may have been using them as inspiration rather than actually including them as costumes in the production. I may have been too indecisive in making a formal stand on how far to push the carnival element into the costumes and may have erred in waiting to see more options from the designer.

Retrospective consideration prompts me to wonder if it would not have been better to have required the costume designer to design the costumes fully and present her renderings so that we as a team could have given more input or “push” toward the overall production design. Although I was very pleased with the costumes of *Fuddy Meers* and the way they established characters in the 1970s, the sense of a missed opportunity to connect our overall carnival concept remains inescapable.

Additional Costume Responsibilities

The costume designer also agreed to design the special effects make-up for Philip's facial scarring as well as graciously taking on the additional responsibility of designing and building Millet's puppet named "Hinky Binky." I am eternally grateful for the designer's willingness to take on this additional responsibility, since our props master was already overtaxed, as noted above, with her dual role on the production team.

Philip's Facial Scarring

I requested a way to handicap the actor's right eye and ear beginning early in the rehearsal process because I felt it necessary. No one responded adequately to my request, and Trey Martinez (the student who played Philip) struggled through rehearsals without any knowledge of how the make-up would affect his vision, speech, or ability to portray facial expressions until dress rehearsals, which was not enough time to become comfortable on a two-tiered revolving stage under theatrical lighting.

The end result of Philip's make-up was effective insofar as audience perception was concerned. They recognized the scars his injury had occasioned, and therefore they accepted the event that caused it. Trey Martinez was gracious enough to shave half of his head for the prosthetic appliance and remained a trouper with the process as a whole. As for the blindness, we decided to go with a patch due to difficulty in finding a contact lens distributor who would assist us. This decision worked well because Trey was already working with a patch in rehearsal

and it seemed fitting for the antagonist to wear one if the play was indeed to be, or perhaps become, a dark comedy.

Hinky Binky

Hinky Binky was indeed an additional character that needed to be physically developed during the rehearsal process. My suggestion was for Rebecca to collaborate with student actor Nick Prior to create a puppet that Millet may have been able to craft himself with the materials found in a church lady's craft tote brought into the prison during outreach activity times. The concept photos Rebecca offered all pointed toward a Muppet style puppet which fit in well with the 1970s-time period.

My major concern of getting a working puppet on the actor's arm met with resolution early in the rehearsal process. The size and shape of the working puppet was adequate enough to allow the student actor to develop two characters, which one may attribute to the efforts of actor Nick Prior and costume designer Rebecca Armstrong's successful collaboration.

E. Lighting Design

Sheric Hull took on the role as the lighting designer for *Fuddy Meers* as his thesis production in partial fulfillment of the M.F.A. Theatre Design degree requirements. The lighting designer and I had already collaborated on two Theatrix projects in the past, Stephen Massicotte's *Mary's Wedding* and the New Artist Festival, as well as sharing several courses together at UNL. During these collaborative experiences, I feel we formed a shared language

that assisted us in avoiding misunderstanding. That shared vocabulary granted us with a common appreciation for the style and approaches in lighting we both sought to realize.

Before the build process began we agreed that the most important features for the lighting in *Fuddy Meers* was establishing the environment for several different locations as well as creating a feeling of forward movement during the car scenes. The lighting designer was responsible for creating a visual stimulus for the audience whenever Claire recalled a memory, which we labeled “Aha!” moments. Finally, Sheric took on the responsibility of ensuring that the overall look of the show maintained the “fantastic realism” or realistic environment with a touch of fantasy that we as a team sought to accomplish with the overall design concept of the production.

The lighting designer took full advantage of attending all rehearsals to which he was invited. He was also present multiple times during the week before tech rehearsals were scheduled to experiment with the lighting while rehearsals took place. I never felt as if I needed to nudge the designer at all to motivate him during the process, but then again, I believe his faculty advisor, Head of the Design and Technology Program Laurel Shoemaker, was pushing him past his known boundaries without my help.

In fact, during notes after our first official technical rehearsal Professor Shoemaker advised that the designer was playing it way too safe for the concept of the play and challenged him to make bolder choices. The next night I was completely taken aback at the drastic color changes that were made. These changes proved his willingness to depart from his original concept and

his ability as a designer to highlight the mood of the action taking place on the stage. Any notes that I gave Sheric during the technical rehearsal process were implemented. (Appendix I)

F. Sound Design

Araceli Ramirez, an undergraduate freshman with no experience in sound design became the sound designer for *Fuddy Meers* because there were very few students with experience in this area. I learned that Jeff O'Brien, the sound design instructor for the JCSTF, would be beside her throughout the sound design process, which was comforting. The sound designer was along for the ride for most of the design process without offering much in the way of concept; her silence was completely understandable for someone new to the theatre design process. I received a list of sound cues she had developed with Mr. O'Brien before we left for summer and so I believed the sound situation was on track towards completion. (Appendix J)

Our most important conversations for the sound design included creating different environments for the scenes that took place in separate locations, the transitions between these scenes, working with the student composer, Jack Rodenburg, to insert original music to be played on the radio stations during the car scenes and scene transitions. The sound designer was to collaborate directly with the lighting designer to create the audio aspect of Claire's recall of memory moments for the audience to follow during the mystery. For inspiration, I gave the sound designer a music pipe toy that created several mysterious pitches when twirled through the air manually. I believe this toy was of assistance, because it created a wonderfully ominous environment on several occasions throughout the show.

G. Music Score

Musical underscoring, both in film and on the stage, is a significant contributive factor to performance because it supports an emotional undertone that strengthens the actors' performance and audience response. I worked with Jack Rodenburg on a previous stage production of *Mary's Wedding* by Stephen Massicotte that incorporated a complete original score for the production and looked forward to collaborating with him on *Fuddy Meers*.

The composer and I discussed the music for *Fuddy Meers* early in the process and decided on a 1970s-style music that parallels popular music. I wanted the audience to recognize the music and yet distort it enough as not distract them from the action taking place onstage. For example, audiences might recognize Blue Oyster Cult's *Don't Fear the Reaper* (1976) through note progression, but the melody's distortion might reflect the distorted images of the play's title; we also discussed using alternate lyrics for this and other songs.

After our initial discussions on the music, the composer was silent for a while during the design process. The composer's silence did not benefit the collaboration with the sound designer, who did not have any experience in working with a music composer. I believe this silence may have hurt the team and perhaps the production as a whole. When the music arrived at the end of the build process we could use only parts of it. What happened to the composer? Nobody really knows.

VII. Casting

Gertie

Due to the close proximity of the audience in the Studio Theatre and the difficulty of the role of Gertie, who suffers from aphasia and cannot speak properly, the department allowed us to hire an experienced age appropriate actress from the community. Upon the tip from my advisor, I contacted and auditioned veteran Lincoln, NE performer Cecilia Burkhart for the role of Gertie and cast her immediately. I believe that my concern for the role and the department's support to allow outside casting helped to make this play successful. The pre-casting also allowed Cecilia an additional month with the difficult script before rehearsals officially began.

Mainstage Auditions

The JCSTF held mainstage auditions the first week of the fall semester, on Wednesday October 24, 2016, less than one week from when *Fuddy*'s rehearsals were scheduled to begin. The undergraduate performance majors faced the requirement of presenting two monologues and sing a hymn for either of the two mainstage shows for the semester, *Fuddy Meers* and *Hamlet*. During these auditions, I found it extremely difficult to view the actors' headshots, resumes, and audition forms while watching their auditions from my seat in the house of the Howell's proscenium theatre.

In previous experiences of casting a show, I established a dependable system for myself that required a table that allowed me to sort the paperwork by character along with a discard pile and a compiled call back list. When I requested a table from school's production stage

manager Mr. Brad Buffum, he denied my request. I found it completely unreasonable, and to this day I cannot understand his intransigence. By the end of the lengthy auditions involving about 75 students and requiring about five hours, I had a jumble of papers and a longer list of actors' names on a legal pad than I needed to call back. I would have liked to have had a night to sort through the forms and give more time to the list, but faculty member Wesley Broulik (who was directing *Hamlet*) and I were both chagrined to discover that School guidelines expected us to post the call backs immediately after the auditions.

Call Backs

I called back more actors than I should have so I was pressed for time. I wanted to spend more time with individuals whom I had not worked with in the past but couldn't due to these time restrictions. Call backs also didn't run smoothly because stage manager Riley Redburn and assistant stage manager Shannon Humiston had received their management assignments only two days previous and were not experienced in organizing and running an audition. On a positive note, I believe that this sink or swim situation created a positive bond among Riley, Shannon and me that lasted throughout the rehearsal process and I am proud of our teamwork to overcome the numerous obstacles we encountered.

I invited my advisor, Virginia Smith, and recruited and invited voice coach Sasha Dobson to the call backs to assist with the casting process on Thursday, October 25, 2016. Although I had requested a fight director in the beginning of the process the previous semester (it was included as a priority on the show proposal form), I still had not received word on whom the School might assign for the purpose. During call backs I was able to see and hear the actors read

sides and interact with each other in a more intimate environment, which was valuable. The main stage “cattle call” auditions had been so impersonal and most of the material the student actors used for their auditions was unsuitable for a modernist comedy such as *Fuddy Meers*. By the end of the evening I felt confident in the prospective cast list that Sasha, Virginia and I compiled.

Casting Session

Wesley Broulik and I sat down with the department’s Production Stage Manager and discussed casting options for both productions on Saturday, October 27, 2016. Wesley was gracious, allowing me first choice for all of my actors except for one about whom he wished to use in his production. I had no problem with being flexible and was able to cast a second option for the role without jeopardizing the integrity of the cast. I also believe that this session worked out well for Wesley, because he had several options to choose from for the predominately female cast for his production of *Hamlet* and I only needed two actresses after casting Cecilia from the community. The cast list was posted on the school’s website on October 27, 2016 as follows:

Claire	Abbie Austin
Richard	Hunter Mruz
Kenny	Jack Schroebel
Philip	Trey Martinez
Gertie	Cecilia Burkhart
Heidi	Aguel Lual
Millet	Nick Prior

VIII. Rehearsal Process

Table Work

Fuddy's rehearsal process began with two weeks of table work that included breaks for acting exercises such as improvisation games and exercises from Bogart and Landau's Viewpoints. The Viewpoints exercises provided the means for the cast and I to physically experiment in the categories of space, shape, time, emotion, movement and story. [3] After spending time experimenting on our feet the cast would gather around the table together to discuss the script's plot, characters, and their relationships while brainstorming in order to fill out spreadsheets that I created and distributed as a packet in the beginning of the process. (Appendix C & K)

We concluded table work with a final reading of the script that our sound designer recorded and distributed to the actors and designers so that they could listen as well as read the script. By the end of the first two weeks I felt that we had solidified as a cast and were more than ready to get on our feet and begin blocking out the production according to the schedule by week three.

Blocking

Blocking was extremely complicated for several reasons. The first reason was that technical direction could not answer specific questions about the capabilities of the revolving stage or the drop curtain until construction had taken place. To make the blocking even more complicated was the announcement we received that the set would not be in operation until

technical rehearsals, which felt like a major setback. A second obstacle in the blocking process was that the model and ground plan which the set designer provided me did not reflect the actual size of the built stage props (boxes and car), nor did it incorporate the proper sight lines of the house right seats.

These oversights forced us to make unpleasant changes to the blocking once we moved into the space. These changes forced the actors to make unnatural movements on the stage in order to maintain open positions before the audience. In other words, the design forced us to stage the play as if in a proscenium space when the audience was sitting in an “L” configuration, which caused some of the thrust style blocking to appear flat and unnatural. The only other alternative was to have actors upstage themselves while delivering lines (especially in Gertie’s second level kitchen). I also did my best to keep the actors in motion in pursuit of physical objectives to keep them from sitting in blind spots.

Vocal Coaching

Several of the actors met with Sasha Dobson individually each week outside of the rehearsal hall. This work mainly involved Cecilia for Gertie’s aphasia, Trey for Philip’s lisping speech impediment, and with Nick to create a maintainable second voice for Millet’s Hinky Binky. I also collaborated with Sasha ahead of time in order to create several dates in the rehearsal schedule that allowed time for her to listen in on rehearsal and then work with the rest of the cast members who were not working with her on an individual basis. I believe this process worked well for everyone involved, since the actors delivered the playwright’s

purposefully impaired dialogue with absolute confidence and clarity during the performance run.

Fight Choreography

Fuddy Meers did not get a fight director until late in the rehearsal process. I am not sure what the conflict was in assigning someone to the production but after following up week after week, the time dwindled down and I finally took action in rehearsals as I was afraid for the actors' safety.

When we reached the point of having blocked the rest of the show and were awaiting fight choreography, I decided to place the student actors into the scenario already prepared and asked them to choreograph the fights as their characters would behave. The actors then performed these fights for the rest of the cast and me. We laughed and applauded their efforts. We then incorporated our notes as audience members together in order to create safe fight scenes from these devised sequences.

Harris Smith, the interim head of the department and head of the professional actor training program at the JCSTF, took time out of his extremely busy schedule to assist us in ensuring that the choreography we created was safe and believable to the audience. Due to his busy schedule, he brought in Julia Utter, an undergraduate performance major, as his assistant choreographer. Although Harris was only available two or three times during the rehearsal process, Julia made herself available and was extremely helpful in working with the actors to ensure that the action was clear, believable and most importantly safe.

Character Development

I happily accepted all requests for additional time to meet with actors outside of scheduled rehearsals throughout the process in order to further develop characters and their relationships with each other onstage. These additional one-on-one meetings generally consisted of sitting down and talking through moments of the play, incorporating improvisation, role playing exercises, and in rehearsing the delivery of the dialogue.

For example, it was apparent that the actor portraying Philip (Trey Martinez) was having a difficult time with the character's aggressive demeanor and physical limp. Trey is friendly and mild in his real-life personality, but that fact became a barrier for the believability of the character. Trey and I decided to meet outside of rehearsal where we would set up a tumbling mat as a punching bag. He was uncomfortable with the process at first, but he became completely believable to me after an hour of limping around the room like a wounded rooster before charging and wailing on the mat while shouting obscenities. Trey was able to take this experience and apply it to his performance in way that definitely assisted in creating a more believable character.

Actor Replacement

A week before our technical rehearsals began Harris Smith called to inform me that the actor playing Kenny was under investigation by the university and would be unable to attend rehearsals until further notice. I immediately spoke to my advisor about the situation and we concluded that it would be better to bring in an understudy immediately than to wait. I called

Michael Barth, an undergraduate performance major in the program whom I had worked with on several other projects, and offered him the role of understudy for Kenny. He was excited to accept the position and to undertake the workload even with the explanation that he may not be able to perform the role in front of an audience. We did not have to worry about that technicality for long, because we found out two days later that the investigation process resulted in the previously cast actor's ineligibility to perform in the production.

I immediately made it clear to Michael that the role was his in order to remove that obstacle from his acting process. Michael's dedication to memorizing the lines and blocking for Kenny, to include fight choreography, was truly remarkable. The cast accepted the actor with open arms as if he had always been present. It was evident that everyone's patience and willingness to go the extra mile to make Michael feel welcome, especially that of the stage managers, resulted in a performance that appeared seamless. In fact, after the KCACTF response I asked if our guest respondent could guess which actor had been replaced. He could not do so, which I feel is a major victory for Michael and the rest of our cast and crew.

IX. Technical Rehearsals

Paper Tech

I begrudgingly prepared myself for the fact that we might need to throw a large portion of the production's design concept out after attending a two-day paper tech that took place just before our first technical rehearsal. During this process the stage managers, technical

director, designers and I realized that a majority of the transitions that we had planned might not be possible due to the set's capabilities and the way in which the stage props were built.

First Tech

Fuddy Meers' first technical rehearsal was scheduled for Sunday, October 2, 2016. We were on a tight schedule as a full preview audience would be in attendance three days later on Wednesday, October 5th followed by a two-week performance run that began with a sold-out performance for our opening night on Thursday, October 6, 2016.

My major concerns were the performance's heavy dependence not only on unworked transitions, but also on the recall of memory moments' technical elements crucial to the production's concept. I worried that our stage manager would not have sufficient time calling cues and was concerned that our assistant stage manager was unprepared to lead an inexperienced stage crew due to not being able to use the moving stage beforehand.

There was no doubt that we all felt the pressure of running behind schedule as our first technical rehearsal began. I knew from experience that the time crunch created ideal conditions for a potentially volatile situation to develop, so I went into the technical process with the mindset of maintaining a pleasant working environment no matter what happened. Our goal was to do our best to make our new plan to work in some semblance to what we designed together. After all of our time collaborating, my biggest fear came true as we were forced to tackle an entirely new concept and crew plan for the transitions, and those transitions needed to be incorporated two days before our first invited audience.

First Dress Rehearsal

Our second technical rehearsal went much smoother because we developed a new plan for the crew to achieve the smoothest possible transitions with the time, space, and resources available. I was not satisfied with the result other than the fact that we were actually going to utilize the revolving stage that had been such an arduous building achievement for the technical department.

I felt confident that our stage management and crew would do their absolute best to make the transitions as smooth as possible according to the new plan. With fear looming over us from the complete wash of a wasted first technical rehearsal the night before, we agreed unanimously to press on and begin a technical cue-to-cue from the top of the show without practicing the new transition plan.

As expected, the first cue-to-cue went painfully slow but we all remained in good spirits. All obstacles we encountered the designers, stage management and crew resolved quickly and efficiently. Although we all felt the stress from our setbacks the previous evening, it was gratifying that everybody was willing to work twice as hard to make up for them during our first dress rehearsal. To my surprise, we were able to finish our cue-to-cue, take a break to allow the actors to get into full make up, and then return afterwards to squeeze in a full first run. I didn't have much time at the end of the evening to give notes so I did my best omit anything aesthetic and focused on function to ensure the play had a chance to maintain a steady pace from beginning to end.

Final Dress

On our final dress, I decided it was more important for the stage manager to run the show and practice calling the multitude of technical cues than to hear my suggestions for improvement during the run of the show. I did my best to encourage Riley and to reinforce my confidence in her ability as the stage.

I asked a student who was interested in directing to come in to dictate notes so that I could easily distribute them electronically to all parties involved at the end of the evening. I believe this was very effective as I had a limited time to orally deliver these notes and I did not have to spend unnecessary time after rehearsal typing my notes in order to email them out to everyone.

Preview

On Tuesday, October 5, 2016 the JCSTF opened the house for our first audience. I have heard many of the design faculty and students call this night our final dress with the attempt to treat it as a technical rehearsal, but I disagreed. I firmly believe that any performance in front of an audience should be ready. No matter the difference of opinion, we were all ready for the challenge and the preview was a success as I watched the audience enjoy it from the back of the room.

In my final technical notes, I addressed several problems with pacing, especially in the area of transitions. I offered suggestions on how to increase the pace. I also suggested several timing adjustments with calling the light and sound cues of the recall of memory moments with

Riley. As the cast had requested me to give them notes later instead of staying late after the preview, I sent the performance notes to the stage manager who distributed them to the individual actors electronically that night.

X. Personal Reflection

Script

I love David Lindsay-Abaire's script and would direct the play again. The material never felt unnatural, even with the extreme obstacles in communication that the actors had to overcome. Each character in *Fuddy Meers* is provided with detailed backstory that assists the actors in creating believable characters onstage. Although there are a few plot twists and the dialogue is often difficult to comprehend, the audience is never confused on the characters' needs.

I am also a fan of the play due to the complicated situation of Claire's amnesia allowing the clever introduction of exposition through dialogue. The audience never realizes a great deal of encrypted information is coming their way in order to help them understand the mystery of Claire's past. I believe the best compliment that I can give the script is that the audience physically leaned forward to catch every word during the performance. It was as if the story grabbed them by the nose and led them through the amusement attraction.

Set

This was by far the most dynamic set that I have had the opportunity to direct on and I enjoyed the challenge. I understood my role on the production team from the beginning and

did my best to perform more as a facilitator for the design process than as a driving force. Lisa Haldeman is the most talented set designer I have collaborated with as a director. It was a true pleasure working with her throughout the process, no matter what conflict may have arisen out of our inability to communicate at times.

The set for *Fuddy Meers* was superb despite its shortcomings. The amusement park concept along with moving stage, warped frames and angled stairs definitely helped to establish the physical environment of the play for the actors and audience. The multiple levels allowed the audience to visit separate physical living spaces without having to provide walls or other barriers. The levels also provided the opportunity to show the audience where to look, but gave them the option of seeing the lives of other characters living in different spaces at the same time.

The revolving stage was a fun aspect for the cast, crew and audience. However, I feel that we touched merely the tip of the iceberg with its capabilities in this production. We were able to figure out the transitions as a team but the lengthy process of figuring them out cost us a full tech rehearsal. In the end the magic of theatre prevailed and the moving stage was both a hit and a testament to the hard work of the designer, technical director, the shop, and the crew.

Stage Props

The concept involved using boxes (i.e. the boxes in which we store items and therefore memories) as furniture. Such boxes included the vehicle the student actors drove in four of the

play's scenes as well as the furniture in Richard and Gertie's homes. We discussed the need for quick transitions from the very first production meeting and it was a major factor in Lisa's inclusion of a revolving stage into the set design.

In my opinion, the stage props were not built for quick transitions. They were too cumbersome, nor was there enough room backstage for storage, cast, and crew during transitions. The cramped space severely limited our ability to maintain a consistent pace for the show. Although the vehicle design worked in the end, it was frustrating that its construction began so late in the process. The actors had a difficult time getting into and out of the vehicle and we all got splinters trying to handle the unfinished pieces during our technical rehearsals. We furthermore missed several performance opportunities during the vehicle scenes due to the lack of having the car and revolve in rehearsal.

Sight Lines

The "L" shaped audience configuration in conjunction with the corner thrust of the set design literally painted us into a corner. Unfortunately, the furthest point from the audience was that of Gertie's second level kitchen window, where important action takes place several times in the script. This location resulted in unfavorable blocking situations, since the audience had to look through the backs of actors who blocked the audience's view.

To solve this staging problem the actors had to stand in unnatural positions in order to stay open, sometimes to the extreme position of turning their back to the person to whom they

were speaking to directly. Simply put, the staging assumed conventions of a proscenium style performance. The result was blocking that sometimes appeared unnatural and flat.

The false proscenium arch and the center stairs were amazing aesthetic touches to the design, but they also created sight line problems for several seats on the extreme right side of the house. We also learned that the seating arrangement in the design did not permit adequate seating. Because we had to add chairs in odd places, not every seat in the house had the most pleasant viewing experience. I did my best to compensate by keeping the actors open and in motion.

Curtains

In the beginning of the process I was excited about the curtains. Not only did they tie in the amusement big top aesthetic, they also provided us with a projection surface for the required multi-media aspect of the production. I wish I had been in on the decision-making process of cutting the curtain material and replacing it with canvas. I was also willing to compromise on the painted red and yellow stripes but do not feel this was the best design decision. As a result, the projections were not as visible as they could have been. The final images were visible but the overall quality of the projections suffered. They also limited the color choices during their design.

Entrances & Exits

The curtains that hung from the second tier were not as effective as they needed to be by the time the show opened. The lower section curtain design did not allow for proper

masking backstage, so several cast and crew members could be seen throughout the performance. The curtains also got stuck on items and actors during entrance and exit transitions and sometimes not return to their original positions at all. Lisa attempted to address these technical problems but I don't feel as if the remedies were enough to avoid audience distraction.

The set design also limited us to one formal entrance. The door to Gertie's kitchen lived on the second-tier upstage left. Since there was not a lot of room on the second level the table and chairs needed to be placed in front of the door, which in turn blocked off the doorway just as it did the window upstage right. This inadequacy forced the actors at the table to remain seated, facing downstage with their backs to the actors they were addressing behind them. This staging seemed unnatural but necessary for the actors to remain open for the audience to hear and see their reactions.

Tree

I feel as if we failed to show the audience the elephant in the room. Lisa's original designs stemmed from the tree that Zach fell from when Claire was a young girl but the tree was completely gone by the final draft. I wish that I had been made more of a part of the decision-making process when the tree was cut. The design team and I discussed the importance of the tree as several times the characters say they will "come around the front" before disappearing from the window and then later reappear at the door. Claire also mentions the tree before triggering the memory of Zach. The stage prop boxes that opened into a refrigerator were effective in masking the upstage entrance and exit, but I don't feel as if we

addressed the obstacle between the window and the doorway outside of Gertie's kitchen as effectively as we could have with a physical obstacle present.

Props

The props in this show were crucial and to Lisa's credit she came through on all of them, but I believe that more attention to detail throughout the process could have made this a better production. Most importantly, the actors did not have rehearsal props that represented show props. A red handled hacksaw doesn't have to be red handled in rehearsal, but it could at least be the handle and frame of a hacksaw without the blade. Another example is the props master's neglect in the shovel's design. The shovel is not only a prop mentioned by name in the script but is also used during two stage combat sequences that involved actors hitting each other over the heads with it. It was very unfortunate that the actors were required to wait until dress rehearsals to use a fragile combat prop and then be told that it is was the only one they were going to get and that it must last until closing.

Stage Combat

If we fell down in any performance aspects of the production it was due to the combination of the props and combat sequences that involved these props. I think that we missed a lot of opportunities in the performance due to prop design and lack of time in rehearsal with them. Most importantly we lost the ability to portray the appearance of real violence due to not having a steady fight choreographer that could teach the actors to use the weapon props without harming each other. A real metal shovel with a patch of furniture foam

taped to its broad side is not a safe option to use while rehearsing stage combat sequences with student actors without constant professional training and supervision. I guess I should put that in my lessons learned: Avoid catastrophe. We did, but the performance inevitably suffered for it.

The Car

The car was a technical problem. The car did in fact work just fine by opening night, but it continues to haunt me, along with the idea of what it could have been if we had not run out of time. It is my opinion that the car's build emerged from necessity rather than from an imaginative design concept. We missed an opportunity to astonish our audience, because the car was merely functional and it failed to create an interactive environment for the actors and audience. The shifting back and forth on the stage was fun and allowed the actors to remain facing out toward the audience but this motion became monotonous during a few of the longer scenes. We failed to establish forward motion for the vehicle, and the repetitive back and forth on the stage revolve sometimes worked against the static screen image.

Projections

Zach Trout's projections successfully filled the multimedia requirement for the thesis project. The preshow segment introduced the carnival concept to the audience as well as introducing the situation and each character before their official entrance. Trout's idea served as an excellent introduction to the play; it caught the audience's attention, but we missed the mark on overall concept. This miscalculation was due mainly to the fact that we invoked

carnival aspects of the characters which really were not there. The video images of the characters failed furthermore to associate the characters with their costumes of the actual performance.

The road progression sequences were very flat and representational as one would see at an amusement park shooting range. The subtle alternation of a hat or bowling pin for trees was effective, but time constraints did not allow the refinement of moving images traveling toward a fixed vanishing point, which created movement on a single plane. Had more time to work with the vehicle scenes been available we could have created a better solution, such as shifting the diminishing point left and right to match the pathway of the vehicle onstage.

Performance

The actors accepted the concept and presented the story we agreed upon in rehearsals. The actors made huge strides in their performances at different times in the process and it was fun to watch as they too experienced recall of memory moments with their characters. The cast shared an ensemble mentality that became even stronger when we made the actor change so late in the process.

Should I be allowed to go back into time, I would work on the moments when each of these characters realizes that they aren't who they thought they were and ensure we highlighted these events. Those moments were tacitly present in the final performance, but they often lacked clarity. In like manner, I would have liked to work the combat earlier to make

it more realistic, thereby adding the element of danger that I feel we failed to achieve in the final performance.

In conclusion, the numerous delays of not being able to work with a fight choreographer or with realistic combat props on the moving stage before technical rehearsals seriously limited the performance but did not cripple it. I believe that the audiences enjoyed the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film's achievement and am proud to have directed the actors during the *Fuddy Meers* rehearsal process.

Lighting

Sheric Hull's lighting design set the mood for the big top production from house open to close. Mr. Hull highlighted Claire's recall of memory moments by programming chase patterns into the hanging string lights that hung from the trellis and second tier. No matter what was occurring on the stage the audience knew to pay attention when they saw that particular cue. This effect was also successful in rewarding the audience for making discoveries along with our protagonist. I do not believe that this effect could have been done with any more thought or precision than did Sheric in his lighting design.

Although we didn't quite achieve the lighting effect of the traveling vehicle the way I would have liked, the variety of the shapes, textures and colors during the vehicle scenes was successful enough to maintain the audience's focus on the actors in the vehicle. I think with more time the lighting designer and projection designer could have collaborated further to create forward momentum in the vehicle.

Sound & Music

Araceli Ramirez's sound design was successful in the attempt to highlight Claire's recall of memory moments, because Araceli programmed them to correspond with Sheric Hull's lighting design. Each time Claire made a truthful discovery about her past she and the audience heard a positive chiming sound along with a programmed flash of string lights, which I hoped might resemble an imagined firing of neurons in the human brain. Once the stage manager mastered the timing of these effects, she achieved the desired outcome. Araceli's experimental music pipe sounds for Claire's moments of distraction added the right amount of tension to the climax of the play. Had we enjoyed more time, I believe we could have worked on creating more realistic environmental tracks for the scenes to make each one unique and completely separate from the other locations on the unit set during the performance.

Unfortunately, Jack Rodenburg's music came too late in the process to work within the framework of our concept. We used his music during the vehicle scenes but then we quickly turned it down through the rest of the performance. The changing of stations between Kenny and Richard could have had an audience rolling but we missed the mark due to not having the time to work in the business with the technical elements. We also missed the opportunity to play some original music during the preshow, throughout the performance to include transitions, and at the curtain call. Such music would have represented our overall concept more so than did the strictly carnival music we ended up using.

Costumes

The costumes came straight from the 1970s with no hint of the carnival theme, which I feel was a poor decision on my part. I also realize that if the costumes came from the 1970s, the hairstyles certainly did not. Nor were there any of the sideburns men of that era grew and displayed. Rebecca Armstrong's initial design photos all included the carnival aspects for each character but the end result failed to show any resemblance. At some point in the process I failed to make a decision on the costume level and furthermore failed to follow up to ensure it was taking place. By dress rehearsals it was too late to make changes, because I was worried about confusing the audience more than unifying the production design. I feel the dissonance between costume design and actual costume construction might have distracted the audience, whose introduction to the carnival setting and characters in the pre-show was tangential and then failed to reintroduce itself during the production.

On the other hand, in fact almost literally on the other hands, Rebecca's design for the puppet Hinky Binky was an expressive prop that provided an eighth character in the cast. The costume and make-up crews received efficient training and remained extremely friendly and helpful towards the cast. Finally, Philip's special effects make-up design and eyepatch worked well for the character, leaving Trey Martinez enough freedom of his facial expressions to animate the character fully.

Faculty Advisement

It was interesting to work with all of the faculty advisors as well as with student designers during this thesis project. There were many occasions when it might have been more effective simply to meet in separate groups for shorter periods of time than the single weekly meetings. Those meetings often proved uneventful and pressed for time. The designers and I also faced the situation that each word spoken by the team was being evaluated. I understand completely that this is a necessity for our development as artists, but it did not create an open environment for bouncing ideas around the room, because we were all afraid of saying something that faculty advisors might hold against us.

The directing advisement from Virginia Smith was professional and constructive. Her blocking advice was always helpful and I do not feel there was a single instance that I did not agree with her performance or technical notes. I therefore applied all of the tips I received from her during the process.

Conclusion

I am proud to have collaborated with such talented and dedicated artists in our effort to stage David Lindsay-Abaire's *Fuddy Meers* before our UNL audience. Together, I believe we did our absolute best to create an invigorating environment for our audience, given the time and resources available.. After collecting responses from the media and academia, I am pleased to conclude that we were successful in our endeavors. (Appendix M)

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APPENDIX A Play Proposal

Play Proposal for University Theatre 2015-2016 Season

Submitted by: Dustin M. Mosko (*Director Submission*)

Date: 10/15/2015

I. Basic Information

- a. Title: *Fuddy Meers*
- b. Author: David Lindsay-Abaire
- c. Type/Genre: A Comedy in Two Acts (1 hour 50 minutes + Intermission)
- d. Musical: Straight Play
- e. Date of Comp: 1999
- f. Historical Period: Contemporary
- g. Royalty: Dramatists Play Service, Inc. (\$80 per performance)

II. Casting Requirements

- a. Number of Male: 4
 - i. Richard- 30's- chatty, friendly, sometimes nervous, man
 - ii. Kenny- 17 – a troubled teen
 - iii. Limping Man- 30's- lisping, limping, half blind and half deaf man with secrets
 - iv. Millet- 30's- an odd man with a puppet
- b. Number of Female: 3
 - i. Claire- 30's- a generally sunny woman with amnesia
 - ii. Gertie-60's-a clear-headed lady who had a stroke and can't speak properly
 - iii. Heidi-30's-a tough woman in a uniform
- c. Special Intent: My only concern is Gertie (60's) as we'd have to age a student
- d. Thesis Opportunity: MFA Directing Thesis proposal

III. Preferred Slot in Season: **Fall #1 (Studio)** or Fall#2 (Howell)

Special Circumstances: Requesting a fall slot (Thesis film produced in spring)

IV. General Staging Considerations

- a. Staging Options: Flexible set allows for any stage configuration
- b. Studio Seating: Open to designer advisement

V. Technical Considerations

- a. Setting:
 - i. Fantastic Realism. I believe the set designer could be challenged and have a lot of fun designing a suggestive setting that incorporates both the reality that Claire physically lives in and the carnival's "House of Mirrors" or "Fun House" effect of her psychological amnesia. For example, a chair may be too big, too small or have one leg shorter than the others. The window could be warped,

- melting or be an actual “Fun House” mirror. The set can be built on a large scale or with representational set props and no walls depending on budget and designer concept.
- ii. Special Effects: Depends on budget, but none crucial to the play. I would like to explore the option of transforming the set from the carnival Fun House in the beginning into a more realistic unit set as Claire regains her memory.
- b. Lighting:
- i. Projectors, a computer and a videographer will be needed as film integration is a requirement for the MFA Directing Thesis in 2016. I believe that this play provides ample opportunities to incorporate video aspects into a stage production. For example, realistic film aspects may represent Claire’s memories as they occur to her throughout the play. On the other hand, abstract computer animations can show Claire’s internal struggle as she attempts to remember her past but fails to do so.
 - ii. *Fuddy Meers* is best served with an intricate lighting design that incorporates elaborate cuing to achieve the House of Mirrors effect of Claire’s psychological amnesia. The lighting should always shift in shape, direction, texture and intensity until Claire’s true memories can be highlighted with realistic lighting. Lighting can also be utilized to establish multiple locations without having to build multiple sets.
- c. Costuming:
- i. *Fuddy Meers* will remain contemporary and doesn’t call for any special costuming outside of Heidi’s police uniform- which doesn’t need to fit her properly as it is stolen. However, I would love to collaborate with the costume designer and props master to create quick costume changes (or costume pieces or accessories that can easily be switched out) for the characters that surround Claire as the show progresses. I believe this will not only add comic bits but also help to highlight Claire’s memory problems and add to her confusion. For example, The Limping Man could be wearing a black long sleeved shirt, exit and return wearing a blue one. Heidi could have her hair up, exit and come back with it braided, exit again and have down when she returns. The options are limitless and will help to keep the audience attentive as well.
- d. Sound:
- i. Sound design is an integral aspect of *Fuddy Meers* as it reveals Claire’s memories to the audience and assists in creating Fun House environment of the play. From my experiences of the carnival attraction, the sound is very similar to the lighting. It can echo, be too loud, too soft, or sound as if it is coming from an impossible distance. I believe the sound designer will have a field day mixing voices, music and special effects into the play as well as having the option to include live specialty microphone effects from the actors onstage (if we decide to go with wireless microphones for this). I would also love to explore the option of hiding speakers under risers for special sound effects.
- e. Make Up:
- i. Aging will be necessary if student performed (Gertie is 60 years old).
 - ii. Burn effect on Limping Man (half his face is melted and one ear is missing).
 - iii. Bullet and stab wounds take place onstage (blood not mandatory).

- f. Properties:
 - i. Hinky Binky puppet is destroyed and put back together each show
 - ii. Hand gun (doesn't have to fire) and knife (Gertie stabs Limping Man) are present in the show
- g. Multi-Media Needs:
 - i. Computer, Projector(s), Videographer, Cyclorama (see Lighting above).

VI. Additional Comments/ Concept/ Production Considerations:

The underlying theme of *Fuddy Meers* is miscommunication and our relentless attempts to be understood by others. Each of Lindsay-Abaire's characters have some form of communication barrier they must overcome and each succeeds, to varying results, by the end of the show.

As a concept, I believe that Claire is trapped in a Carnival Fun House full of distorted memories and her guides must break through communication barriers in order to lead her out of the endless maze of fog and mirrors. A House of Mirrors, or Fun House, is meant to be an entertaining carnival attraction, but it has the potential to become a disturbing experience if one were to get lost or trapped in its maze. I believe this is a great opportunity to challenge a production team to create an environment that invites the audience to actively experience Claire's journey by utilizing distorted lighting, sound, setting, costumes and projections.

The playwright, David Lindsay-Abaire, is absolutely "some kind of comic genius" (Heilpern, New York Observer). I would like to explore this particular play because I believe it will entertain our audience (112 and community) as well as challenge the cast, production team and myself. Although a majority of the characters are in their 30's I believe it can be successfully cast here at the JCSTF.

Technically, this show can be as large or small as the budget allows. It can be done with an elaborate set on Howell or in the laps of the audience with only lights, sound and projections in the Studio. This contemporary play also allows for a small costume budget. Although there are several props and set locations called for in the script, I am confident that the production team and I can brainstorm on creative ways to operate within a restricted budget.

APPENDIX B Dramatic Action (Triggers & Heaps)

Act One Scene One- Richard's Home

The alarm sounds. Claire wakes up with no memory.

Richard enters and establishes control through routine. Claire is confused and looks for clues.

Richard controls Claire by picking her wardrobe. Claire resists by refusing to wear it.

Richard insists that Claire wear the dress. Kenny enters and interrupts.

Claire attempts to find more modest clothing than the pajamas she is wearing. She picks up a robe and reveals the puzzle books.

Kenny attempts to speak with his mother. Richard interrupts and sends him away.

Claire smells ribbon candy. Richard represses the memory by defacing Kenny.

Claire and Richard see the puzzle books. They both attempt to take possession.

Claire grabs the books first. Richard attempts to physically confiscate them from her.

Claire maintains possession of a single puzzle book and protects it. Richard prepares to take the book by force.

Kenny enters and distracts Richard. Richard assaults Kenny. (INTRUSION)

Richard holds Kenny in a painful wrist lock. Kenny releases the money.

Richard releases Kenny. Kenny grabs the money.

Richard attempts to take possession of the money. Kenny retreats toward the door.

Richard pursues Kenny. Claire interrupts by attracting Richard's attention.

Kenny escapes with the money. Richard pursues Claire and the puzzle book.

Claire protects the puzzle book. Richard gives Claire the Filofax.

Claire sees a picture of herself in the Filofax. Claire doesn't recognize herself.

Richard gives Claire a mirror. Claire sees her reflection in the mirror.

Claire remembers the name Philip. Richard is shocked at hearing Philip's name.

Claire remembers trauma. Richard retreats to the bathroom and secures the door.

Claire reads the script from the Filofax. Philip enters and answers the script.

Claire searches for clues in the Filofax. Philip introduces himself as Claire's brother, Zachary.

Philip attempts to escape with Claire. Claire resists by using her attire as a delaying tactic.

Philip controls Claire by picking her wardrobe. Claire attempts to delay once more.

Philip physically pulls Claire away from the bed. Claire grabs her puzzle book and Filofax.

Philip physically pulls Claire out of the room. Philip and Claire exit.

Act One Scene Two- Limping Man's Car

Philip drives Claire away from her home. Claire searches for words in her puzzle book.

Claire asks Philip to remove his mask. Philip removes his mask to reveal his deformity.

Claire enquires about the cause of the deformity. Philip will not reveal the cause.

Claire presses Philip for clues. Philip reveals their designation.

Claire searches for information on Gertie in the Filofax. Claire finds a photo of Gertie in the Filofax.

Philip confiscates the Filofax and throws it out the window. Claire presses Philip for clues.

Philip verbally lashes out in anger. Claire hears echoey carnival music.

Philip denies that there is music playing. Claire connects the music as a side-effect of the amnesia.

Claire looks at her reflection in the mirror. Claire questions Philip about the scar on her forehead.

Phillip is distracted by the question. Phillip fails to see a trailer truck changing lanes.

Claire sees the impending collision. Claire alerts Phillip.

Phillip takes evasive action. Phillip thanks Claire and tells her to relax.

Claire secures the picture of Gertie in her pocket. Claire searches for clues in her puzzle book.

Act One Scene Three- Gertie's Home (Kitchen)

Gertie sits in her kitchen sipping tea. Claire appears in the window.

Claire compares Gertie to her photograph. Claire doesn't recognize Gertie but confirms by comparison.

Claire introduces herself to Gertie. Gertie is surprised and concerned about Claire's arrival.

Gertie invites Claire into the house. Claire accepts the invitation to enter the house.

Phillip appears in the window. Gertie is surprised and unhappy to see Phillip.

Claire introduces Phillip as Zach, Gertie's son. Gertie challenges Phillip about his presence.

Claire tells Gertie that Phillip rescued her from Richard. Phillip coerces Gertie to keep silent.

Gertie invites them into the house. Claire and Phillip exit the window.

Gertie finds a knife and conceals it. Claire and Phillip enter the kitchen.

Claire runs to greet her mom. Gertie embraces Claire.

Phillip checks the house to ensure no one is else is there. Phillip reminds Gertie of their seclusion.

Claire sees a tree outside the window. Claire remembers Zach climbing the tree.

Phillip coerces Gertie into lying. Gertie submits and retreats to the refrigerator.

Gertie offers Claire bacon in an attempt to warn her. Phillip throws the bacon out of the window.

Gertie withdraws in fear. Claire protects her mother.

Philip asks Gertie for a hack-saw. Claire remembers her daddy's workbench.

Philip exits to the cellar to remove his manacle. Gertie attempts to warn Claire about Philip.

Claire smells her father's cologne. Gertie checks to ensure Philip cannot hear their conversation.

Claire remembers her daddy's yellow cap. Gertie pulls Claire from her seat at the table.

Claire remembers the kennels. Gertie pulls Claire toward the front door.

Claire remembers her daddy walking the dogs. Hinky Binky appears in the window.

Hinky Binky says Millet's name. Millet argues with his puppet in the window.

Millet sees that Claire and Gertie can see him. Millet yells out in fear.

Claire and Gertie yell out in fear. Millet disappears from the window.

Philip hears the commotion in the kitchen. Philip enters kitchen with hack saw.

Hinky Binky reappears in the window. Philip pulls the puppet off of Millet's hand.

Claire and Gertie see the matching manacles. Millet apologizes for his behavior.

Philip gives Millet the puppet back. Claire questions Millet and Philip about their restraints.

Millet begs to remove the manacle. Philip invites Millet into the house.

Claire mistakes Gertie's cocaine explanation. Claire remembers the blue croquet mallet.

Millet enters the kitchen. Claire interrogates Millet for clues.

Millet cracks under pressure and reveals secret plans. Philip and Millet exit to remove manacles.

Gertie tries to warn Claire. Philip enters and exits with Claire to separate her from Gertie.

Gertie calls 911. Philip enters the kitchen and sees Gertie on the phone.

Philip threatens Gertie. Philip apologizes.

Act One Scene Four- Richard's Car

Richard drives Kenny in the car. Kenny smokes a joint.

Richard enlists Kenny's help in the search for Claire. Kenny is non-committal.

Richard mentally breaks down. Richard smokes pot to alleviate the stress.

Richard and Kenny are pulled over by the police. Heidi approaches as a police officer.

Heidi questions Richard about marijuana. Richard admits that Kenny was smoking.

Heidi orders Richard and Kenny to exit the vehicle. Richard and Kenny exit the vehicle.

Heidi makes demands of Richard via gunpoint. Richard gives Heidi his driver's license in submission.

Heidi threatens to request a background check on Richard. Richard "disarms" Heidi.

Richard gains control of the revolver. Richard takes Heidi prisoner and they all drive away.

Act One Scene Five- Gertie's Home (Basement)

Millet and Claire are playing in the basement. Millet expresses weariness of the kewpie doll.

Claire remembers her father winning the doll. Millet attempts to exit the basement to get Philip.

Claire blocks Millet's escape. Millet submits to Claire's dominance and begins to break down.

Claire comforts Millet as he removes Hinky Binky's manacle. Millet avoids Claire's questions.

Claire pulls a monster mask from the box. Claire remembers Zack scaring her with the mask.

Millet sees Claire's wedding ring. Millet reminisces about his past.

Claire pulls a squirt gun from a box. Claire hears a dog barking, far off, echoey.

Millet does not hear the bark. Claire puts on the mask.

Millet laughs nervously at Claire. Claire holds Millet at gun point with a water gun.

Millet resists and withholds the truth. Claire replaces the water gun with a hack-saw.

Claire places Millet in an armlock. Claire threatens to cut off Millet's hand.

Hinky Binky pleads for his life. Claire releases Millet.

Hinky Binky reveals the cause of Claire's scar. Claire hears a dog barking.

Millet yells out in fear. Philip enters from the kitchen.

Claire mistakes Richard for Philip in Millet's story. Claire presses Philip for answers.

Philip reassures Claire. Claire attempts to kiss Philip's cheek.

Philip turns his head. Philip and Claire kiss.

Philip is distracted and gives Claire a clue. Claire exits the basement.

Philip removes his manacle. Millet begs for forgiveness.

Act One Scene Six – Richard's Car

Richard drives. Kenny holds Heidi at gunpoint.

Heidi threatens legal action. Richard reveals his past.

Heidi reveals her past. Kenny lights a joint.

Heidi has a panic attack. Richard destroys the joint.

Kenny rebukes Richard. Richard insults Kenny.

Kenny puts the gun in his mouth. Heidi and Richard call his bluff.

Kenny takes the gun out of his mouth. Richard makes a detour at Denny's.

Act One Scene Seven- Gertie's Home (Kitchen)

Claire confides in Gertie. Gertie warns Claire to trust no one but her.

Claire searches her puzzle book for answers. Gertie searches for the photos.

Claire hears an echoey bark. Claire remembers the dog Nancy.

Gertie gives Claire the photographs. Claire looks at the fun house photograph.

Gertie uses the tin cover to explain fuddy meers. Claire realizes that Philip is not Zach.

Claire hears carnival music pipes. Claire remembers a frying pan.

Gertie confirms the frying pan. Philip and Millet climb the stairs with gear.

Gertie hides the photographs. The carnival music stops.

Philip and Millet enter. Philip tells Claire to get in the car.

Millet doesn't want to deviate from the plan. Claire refuses to go.

Philip commands Millet to get in the car. Hinky Binky stands up to Philip.

Philip commands Gertie to help him. Gertie protects Claire.

Philip commands Millet to review the route. Hinky Binky stands up to Philip.

Gertie gives Claire Zach's obituary. Claire remembers that Zach died.

Kenny, Heidi and Richard appear in the window. Everyone screams.

Kenny, Heidi and Richard exit from the window. Gertie grabs the knife.

Philip pulls Claire toward the window. Gertie stabs Philip in the back.

Claire looks for a place to hide. Gertie calls 911.

Millet tries to escape. Richard enters and blocks Millet's escape.

Heidi enters at gunpoint with Kenny. Millet tries to hide from the police.

Kenny sees Claire. Richard reaches for Claire.

Claire evades Richard. Philip commands Millet to call a doctor.

Millet attempts to take the phone. Gertie struggles to keep possession of the phone.

Richard pursues Claire. Claire evades Richard.

Heidi questions Philip about his wound. Philip accuses Gertie.

Heidi grabs the gun from Kenny in order to shoot Gertie. Kenny struggles to keep the gun.

Hinky Binky joins Millet to take the phone from Gertie. Gertie stabs Hinky Binky.

Claire yells. The gun goes off.

(We decided to cut the intermission that was placed here in the script).

Act Two Scene One- Gertie's Home (Kitchen)

Kenny has a bullet wound. Heidi stands holding the room at gunpoint.

Heidi gives Millet orders. Millet obeys Heidi.

Philip and Heidi reveal their plan. Claire demands the truth.

Gertie explains the situation to Claire. Claire hits her head in frustration.

Richard comforts Claire. Heidi comforts Philip.

Kenny calls for help. Philip says that Claire was a nurse.

Claire stops hitting her head. Heidi commands Millet to go to the basement.

Millet insists on going back to the plan. Philip agrees to go back to the plan.

Kenny offers to tell Claire the truth. Richard and Philip interrupt.

Millet escorts Richard and Gertie to the Basement. Kenny calls for help.

Heidi gives Philip the gun. Heidi commands Philip to shoot if they move.

Heidi exits to find medical supplies. Philip offers to help Kenny.

Kenny refuse Philip's help. Claire tends to Kenny's wound.

Claire remembers her medical training. Claire is confused.

Kenny corrects Claire. Philip asks Claire for help.

Claire bandages Kenny's arm. Claire remembers Kenny's birth.

Act Two Scene Two- Gertie's Home (Basement)

Millet stands guard over Richard and Gertie. Hinky Binky asks for help.

Millet asks for a sewing kit. Gertie searches in the basement and finds photo album.

Gertie exits to the kitchen. Gertie returns with sewing kit and photo album.

Millet sews Hinky Binky. Gertie shows Richard wedding photographs.

Gertie expresses regrets. Richard expresses regrets.

Millet expresses regrets. Richard hints to Gertie about the shovel.

Gertie searches for the shovel. Richard distracts Millet.

Millet recognizes ring in Richard's story. Millet chases Richard.

Gertie chases after Millet with the shovel. Gertie hits Millet with the shovel.

Act Two Scene Three- Gertie's Home (Kitchen)

Claire bandages Kenny's arm. Heidi commands Claire to treat Philip.

Heidi blames Philip for the trouble. Philip defends himself and blames Heidi.

Heidi reveals their plans. Claire asks Heidi to get ice.

Gertie enters with photo album. Gertie exits with the sewing kit.

Heidi offers frozen bacon. Philip demands she get rid of the bacon.

Heidi puts the bacon back. Claire enquires about Philip's fear of bacon.

Philip reminds Heidi of secrecy. Heidi uses Claire's amnesia as scapegoat.

Philip reminds Heidi of Kenny's presence. Kenny tells Claire the truth.

Philip defends himself to Claire. Heidi commands Claire to stitch Philip.

Kenny insults Philip. Heidi commands Philip to shoot Kenny.

Philip refuses to shoot Kenny. Heidi stitches Philip's wound.

Claire realizes that Richard didn't beat her. Claire remembers Zack's accident.

Heidi helps to defend Philip. Philip rejects Heidi for Claire.

Heidi sticks Philip with the needle. Kenny asks Claire about his birthday.

Claire remembers Kenny's birth date. Philip interrupts Kenny.

Heidi sticks Philip with the needle. Kenny mentions the Piedmont Fair.

Claire remembers her father and brother. Kenny reminds Claire about Philip's abuse.

Philip attempts to get up. Heidi holds Philip down.

Kenny mentions bacon. Claire remembers the traumatic event.

Heidi finishes the stitches. Kenny commands Philip to leave.

Philip asks Claire to leave with him. Heidi refuses to bring Claire along.

Philip asks Claire to take him back. Heidi objects.

Philip tries to comfort Heidi. Heidi exits to the basement.

Philip pulls Claire toward the door. Kenny holds Philip at gunpoint.

Claire takes the gun from Kenny. Claire throws the gun out of the window.

Claire hears puppies yapping. Claire mistakes Philip for her father in a memory.

Claire refuses to go with Philip. Philip places Claire in a painful wrist lock.

Kenny defends his mother. Claire hears carnival music.

Kenny beats on Philip. Claire thwarts Kenny's attack.

Heidi yells an alarm from the basement. Richard hits Heidi with the shovel.

Heidi enters the kitchen and blacks out. Richard enters kitchen with shovel.

Gertie enters the kitchen with the puppet. Millet enters kitchen with hack saw.

Gertie gives Millet the Puppet. Claire gives Millet the ring.

Millet exits the house. Claire takes charge of the situation.

Act Two Scene Four- Richard's Car

Richard drives Claire, Gertie and Kenny home. Claire requests her Filofax be updated.

Kenny asks Claire about his blue sweater. Claire says she will fix it.

Claire enquires about her marriage with Richard. Richard explains marriage.

Claire begins to drift to sleep. Kenny attempts to keep Claire awake.

Claire drifts further to sleep. Richard attempts to keep Claire awake.

Claire mistakes Richard for Philip. Richard corrects Claire.

Claire demands Richard update the Filofax. Richard agrees to update the book.

Claire falls asleep. Richard and Kenny ride home in silence.

APPENDIX C Character Analysis

Fuddy Meers Character Analysis Chart					
	DESIRE/ OBJECTIVES	WILL	MORAL STANCE/ ALIGNMENT	DECORUM	TACTICS
CLAIRE	External: To regain her memory. Internal: To protect her family.	Very strong. Claire is very intelligent and picks up clues like a bloodhound on a scent. She will not be deterred in obtaining her desires.	Lawful Good. So much so that she accepted constant abuse from Philip when they were married. She only retaliated to protect Kenny, and even then could not accept her evil action and had a mental breakdown.	Claire is energetic and pleasant to everyone she meets. She maintains a judgement free attitude and sees only the good in people. She has little control over her wardrobe, but it is evident she is more modest than the way she is being dressed by Richard.	Strategizes as if playing a game or puzzle in order to obtain clues about her past.
RICHARD	External: To live a life as a model citizen. Internal: To prove a previous love wrong. Internal: To receive Claire's love and acceptance.	Strong. Richard is a choke hold artist, grabs the upper hand before a situation can occur. However, he will retreat quickly if he loses his advantage. He would be no match for Claire if she had her memory and takes advantage of this daily.	Chaotic Neutral. Will do whatever it takes to satisfy his desires. He knows right from wrong but neither action affects his conscious.	Richard works hard to ensure that his external appearance does not reflect the chaos that is happening within him. He goes through each day as if playing poker with an ace up his sleeve.	Holds a stable job, marries a pretty woman, provides for his family, acts as a model father to his step-son, gets a dog, and obeys the law.
KENNY	External: To protect Claire. Internal: To have Claire remember him. Internal: To piss Richard off as much as possible.	Weak. Kenny has seen better days and he has been a witness to worse. He has an invalid mother and grandmother, a father in prison and a new stepfather who controls every aspect of his life. On top of this, he has dyslexia which has forced him to be held back in school.	True Neutral. Does just enough to stay near his mother in order to protect her, but lashes out any way he knows how when she cannot remember him. Will do anything to protect his mother, even if it means committing an evil act.	Kenny's physical appearance reflects the apathy that he feels internally. He slumps, he drags his feet, and he wears the same clothes that make him feel comfortable, even if they are dirty and smell like weed.	Smokes weed to cope with Claire's amnesia. Checks in on his mother to ensure she is okay. Is a complete smart ass to Richard at every available opportunity. Is shot attempting to disarm Heidi. Assaults Philip.
PHILIP	External: To escape to Canada Internal: To seek redemption or revenge, but overall he needs closure from Claire.	Very strong. Philip is Claire's shadow. For every good deed there must be a bad in order to keep order and balance. Philip is the memory of an evil deed that Claire cannot forget. He will not be deterred in obtaining his desires.	True Evil. His only motivations are selfish and his abusive nature stems from not maintaining control of his environment. Manipulating others brings him comfort.	Dark clothes for a dark soul. He wears a ski mask in the beginning that reveals facial scarring that matches his evil nature. He limps and lisps. Only when he is being true to his evil nature does he speak clearly.	Recruits help and breaks out of jail. Kidnaps Claire. Sets the rendezvous point at Gertie's to tie up loose ends before heading to Canada.
GERTIE	External: To protect her family. Internal: To be understood.	Strong. Gertie's aphasia leaves her weak at times as she becomes discouraged, but she would do anything to protect her family.	Lawful Neutral. Lives a good life of good deeds, but will do whatever it takes to protect her family, even if it means committing an evil act.	Wears Moo moo and/or robe and slippers as she has no reason to dress each day. She is very spry despite the communication issue that has left her alone in her home.	Warns Claire about Philip. Calls 911 to report Philip's escape. Stabs Philip and Hinky Binky. Escorts Claire back to Richard's house at the end.
HEIDI	External: To escape to Canada Internal: To find true love.	Strong. Heidi is an animal tamer. She knows at any time the animal may strike back, so she remains focused at all times. She is weak when her power is taken away so she must always try stay one step ahead.	Chaotic Neutral. Will do whatever it takes to satisfy her desires. She knows right from wrong but neither action affects her conscious.	Heidi is a very capable woman that will do anything for love. She wears a stolen police uniform in order to detain Richard from interfering with the plan. She is athletic and carries herself well.	Follows Philip's orders. Escapes to Canada.
MILLET	External: To escape to Canada. Internal: To prove his innocence. Internal: To feel safe.	Weak. Millet has been beaten down by life. He is a tramp that never had a chance. A door mat. Hinky Binky, however, has a Very Strong will and would rule the world if he didn't have a dipship attached to his ass.	Chaotic Good. Can be persuaded to perform shady deeds but they affect his conscious. The possibility of his assuaging the principal has split his personality.	Millet wants to be seen as a respected member of society. He risks a special trip to JC Penny to steal a suit in an effort to look sharp. No matter what he does, his physical appearance tends to make him appear like a clown.	Follows Philips orders. Escapes with proof of his innocence.

<i>Fuddy Meers</i> Social Relationship Chart								
		CLAIRE's	RICHARD's	KENNY's	PHILIP's	GERTIE's	HEIDI's	MILLET's
CLAIRE	is	Blank Slate	Wife	Mother	Sister, then later finds that she is his X-Wife	Daughter	Boyfriend's X-Wife	Hostage
RICHARD	is	Husband	Alter Ego	Step Father	X-Wife's Husband	Son-in-Law	Hostage, Captor & then Hostage again	Hostage
KENNY	is	Son	Step Son	Shadow	Son	Grandson	Hostage, Captor & then Hostage again	Hostage
PHILIP	is	Brother, then later reveals that he is her X-Husband	Wife's X-Husband	Father	Worst Enemy	X-Son-in-Law	Partner-in-Crime and Boyfriend	Partner-in-Crime
GERTIE	is	Mother	Mother-in-Law	Grandmother	X-Mother-in-Law	Muzzle	Hostage	Hostage
HEIDI	is	Captor	Hostage/ Captor	Hostage/ Captor	Girlfriend & Partner-in-Crime	Captor	Hero	Partner-in-Crime
MILLET	is	Captor	Captor	Captor	Partner-in-Crime	Captor	Partner-in-Crime	Protector

APPENDIX D Concept Development

Puzzles and Riddles

*Please feel free to **Add** to this List, answer questions, etc! Change color and font, Have fun- there are no rules! Let's challenge each other and peg down what we want to accomplish with this show! -Dustin*

- Puzzles and riddles, smoke and mirrors, and sleight of hand are all obstacles to perception, just as lies are for the truth... How does Claire rely on her senses to gain clues? What tactics does she use when interacting with people and objects from her past to solve the mystery of her psychological amnesia?
 - *Obviously, a large sense that Claire employs is sound. Not only are some of her memories triggered by certain sounds, but she also takes on the role of a quite eavesdropper. Claire listens to offhand conversation and collects small details and then puzzles those together. It is the same with her sight. There are many objects that she sees in her world, but a few that hold a trigger for her. Claire's subconscious sorts through the information she is perceiving to help her discover her past. In all of these instances, the information Claire needs is hidden in plain sight. It is always present but not obvious, until, once realized, it is unforgettable*
- Each character and object holds a key that unlocks a clue, or provokes a memory to progress Claire's investigation. Once she figures out its connection, how is she rewarded? How can we visually represent these "AHA!" moments to our audience?
 - *In my mind I feel like these moments could be reinforced by something as simple as a sound, a small lighting shift or even a projection.*
- Are some memories better left forgotten?

Limping man

Thum things are better left forgotten.

Claire

I don't know if that's true.

- *I don't think that they are. I think that memories, good or bad, help shape and mold us. I think that with every memory there is a lesson, and if we were to forget the memory, we would never grow.*
- This play is also very much about manipulation. Control of emotions, memories, the environment, self-control and the manipulation of other people. Each character needs

something from Claire in the present in order to move on to the future, just as she must rely on them to inform her about her past. Protection, understanding, acceptance, forgiveness, love, friendship... What does each character need from Claire and why do they want it?

- *For the Limping Man, as we discussed in our pervious production meeting, I believe he desires power. He gets his power by controlling/abusing Claire.*
 - *For Richard, he see's Claire as a fresh start. In the play, Kenny off-handly comments about*
- What is the meaning of "Come around the front?" Why does the playwright want the arrival of each character to be a surprise and then make them disappear before making their formal entrance? Is there a barrier in front of the back door that forces everyone around
 - *I can see a connection with memories when they are in the back of our minds, we have to bring them to the front. Sometimes memories can surprise you out of nowhere.*
- Pictures. Worth 1000 words, but which words strike home the emotional response we get when we look at them? Or is it a color, scent, texture or sound? What flood of memories pours in with the viewing of a picture or hearing a sound? Is it a specific recognition- and then an expansion of memories- like the unzipping of an electronic file or the spark of a flint followed by fire?
- This play is also about the enlightenment figuring out who you are and knowing you will be completely different when you awake the next day. How are we different each day when we awake based on the events of the previous one? In what way do we want to change our audience the morning after they witness our adventure?
- On this same note, what visual images stand out most to us when we read this play? What tableaux do we want to be remembered long after this show is struck?

APPENDIX E


Set Design

Concept Renderings





Transition Storyboards



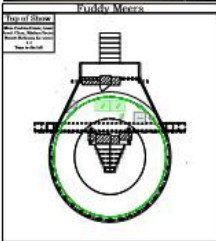
Fuddy Meers


Act 1.1

Scene 1.1.1

Act 1.1.1

Scene 1.1.1





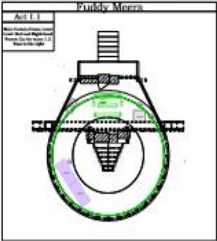
Fuddy Meers


Act 1.2

Scene 1.2.1

Act 1.2

Scene 1.2.1





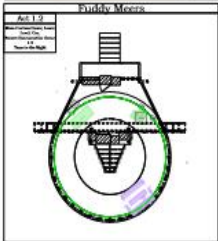
Fuddy Meers


Act 1.3

Scene 1.3.1

Act 1.3

Scene 1.3.1





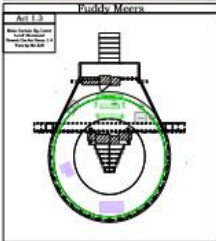
Fuddy Meers


Act 1.4

Scene 1.4.1

Act 1.4

Scene 1.4.1





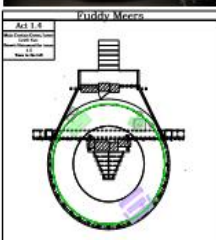
Fuddy Meers


Act 1.5

Scene 1.5.1

Act 1.5

Scene 1.5.1





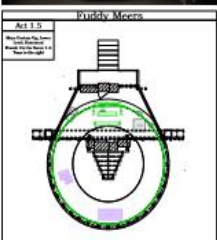
Fuddy Meers


Act 1.6

Scene 1.6.1

Act 1.6

Scene 1.6.1





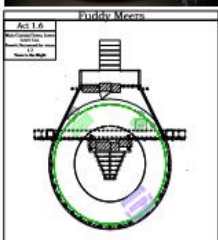
Fuddy Meers


Act 1.7

Scene 1.7.1

Act 1.7

Scene 1.7.1





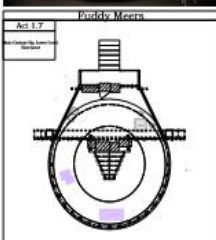
Fuddy Meers

Act 1.8

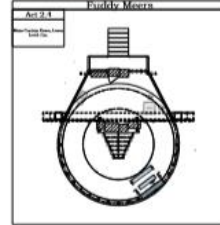
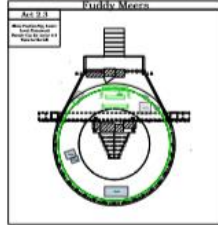
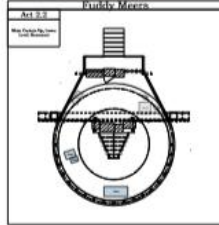
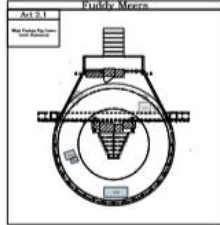
Scene 1.8.1

Act 1.8

Scene 1.8.1



DISCLAIMER	GENERAL NOTES	Fuddy Meers		Scenic Designer Lisa Haldeman		Photo:
		Studio Theatre		402.880.4626 lishaldeman@gmail.com		1
		STORY BOARD		Location Team		
		Dates 09-24-16		Director: Dustin Mosko		
		Scale:		Lighting Designer: Sherie Hall		
				Sound Designer: Anaceli Ramirez		of 2
				Costume Designer		



DECLAIMER	GENERAL NOTES	Fuddy Meers		Studio Designer Lisa Haldeman		Photo
		Studio Theme		407.880.4638	lshaldema149@gmail.com	2
				Creative Team		
		STORY BOARD		Director Dustin Menzies		
				Lighting Designer Sherie Huff		
				Sound Designer Araceli Ramirez		
		Dates 09-24-16	Scale:	Costume Designer		of 2

APPENDIX F
Props

<i>Fuddy Meers Prop List</i>					
Venue: Studio Theatre, UNL Carson School			Director: Dustin Mosko		
Scenic Designer: Lisa Haldeman			Assistant Scenic Designer: Andrea Besch		
Prop #	Pg. # Reference	Prop (name)	Description (location, paint, function)	Qty.	Working Notes
HAND PROPS					
1	19	alarm clock	ringing	1	
2	19	mug	coffee in it	1	
3	20	clothes	hung in closet	2+	costumes?
4	22	puzzle books	wordsearch	2+	
5	23	money	older \$20	1	
6	26	filofax	older, tabs, stuffed	1	
7	35	photo	picture of gertie and house	1	comes out of filofax
8	38	tea cup	gertie's	1	
9	39	knife	kitchen knife	1	
10	39	dish towel	gertie's	3	
11	40	baseball mit	old, dusty	1	
12	41	bacon	pack	1	
13	48	price tags	on suit	2	
14	51	phone	landline	1	
15	52	candy		2+	fits in pocket
16	53, 77	joint	hand rolled marijuana joint	2	
17	58	gun	police pistol .44 magnum older and oversized	1	
18	61	boxes		2+	
19	61	hacksaw	red handle	1	
20	61	vise		1	
21	61	cut off manacle		1	costumes?
22	61	jumprope		1	

23	61	hula hoop		1	
24	61	kewpie doll		1	
25	63	monster mask		1	
26	67	squirtgun		1	
27	77	lighter		1	
28	81	cookie tin		1	
29	82	old photos	clairs childhood	2+	inside cookie tin
30	88	news paper article	zack's obituary	1	
31	106	sewing kit		2?	
32	106	photo album	clair and richards wedding	1	
33	112	shovel		1	
34	113	needle		1	
35	113	thread		1	
36	113	bandages		1	
37	116	frozen food	ground beef, tater tots,	2 (1ea)	
New					
38	20	dress	worn to thanks giving	1	costumes?
39	22	pen	to do word search	1	
40	23	purse	clair's	1	costumes?
41	23	wallet	female	1	costumes?
42	27	mirror	hand mirror	1	dull down
43	29	slippers	clairs	1	costumes?
44	30	manacle	chain hanging down	1	costumes?
45	31	shoes	clairs	1	costumes?
46	37	rear veiw mirror		1	on car
47	42	puppet	hand	1	costumes?
48	59	license and registration	new york, richards	1	
49	59	wallet	mens	1	
50	115	ring	diamond with two rubies on each side	1	costumes?

APPENDIX G Costume Design

UNL

Fuddy Meers

Fall 2016

Cast Member:

Character: Claire

Costume Notes:

- Daily Amnesia
- Former School Nurse
- Quick Changes?
- Carnival Equivalent: Tight rope walker/Trapeze
-







UNL

Fuddy Meers

Fall 2016

Cast Member:

Character: Gertie

Costume Notes:

- Stoke affected speech
- Lives alone
- Carnival equivalent: Fortune Teller





Cast Member:

Character: Kenny

Costume Notes:

- 17 year old pothead



UNL

Fuddy Meers

Fall 2016

Cast Member:

Character: Limping Man

Costume Notes:

- Makeup Note: Burn scarring on 1 side of face from ear to eye socket to lips (2 yrs old)
- Carnival Equivalent: Freak Show





UNL

Fuddy Meers

Fall 2016

Cast Member:

Character: Richard

Costume Notes:

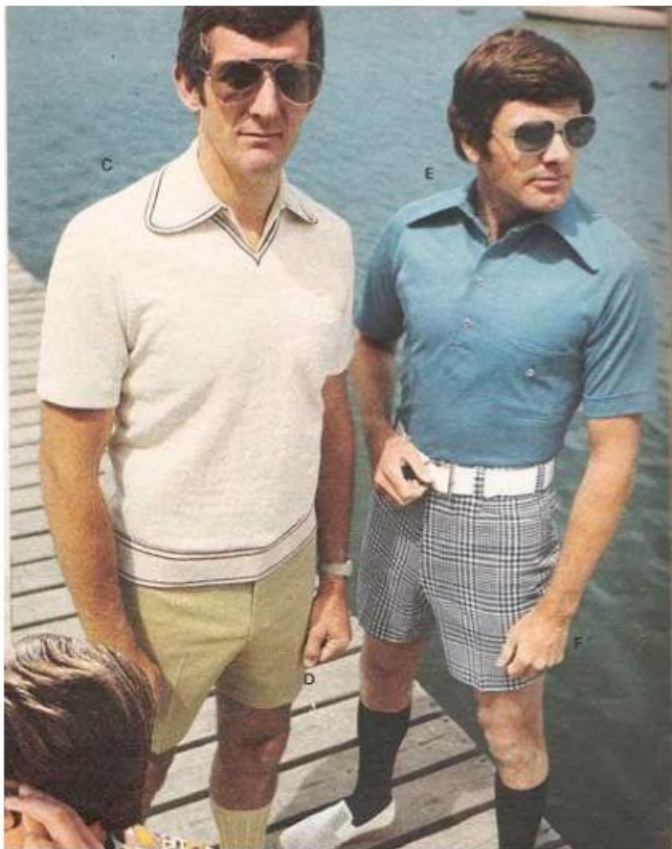
- Former bad life choices guy, now a MRI Tech
- Carnival Equivalent: Ringmaster



UNL

Fuddy Meers

Fall 2016



UNL

Fuddy Meers

Fall 2016

Cast Member:

Character: Millet

Costume Notes:

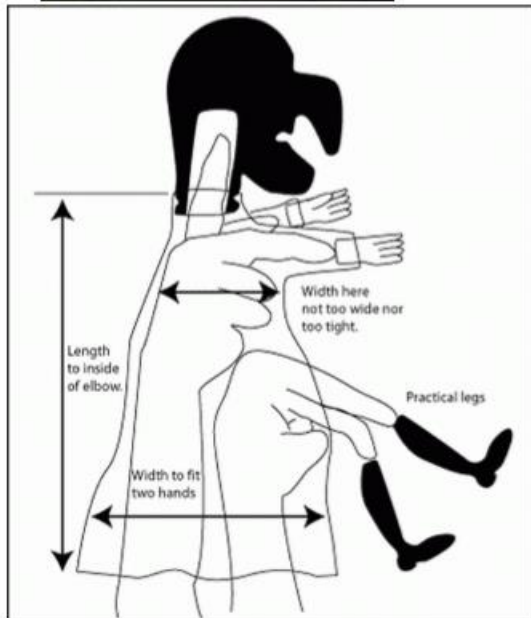
- Carnival equivalent: Clown
-





Cast Member:**Character:** Hinky Binky**Costume Notes:**

- Puppet
- Slightly twisted and foul mouthed



APPENDIX H Projections

Preshow



Vehicle Projections



APPENDIX I Lighting Design

Concept Photographs



FUDDY MEERS				LIGHTING DESIGN: SHERIC HULL	
STUDIO THEATRE					
CUE SHEET	Version	10/3/2016			
Q#	Page #	Line or Action Cue	Description	Notes	Effects
		(bold indicates cue word/phrase)	(what it looks like)	(extra detail)	
0.1		House Warmer/Curtain Warmer	Curtain warmer	Think carnival preshow look.	
0.5		House to Half			
1		Enter Phillip	Nightmarish Glow		
1.5		Alarm Clock Rings	Blackout		
2		After Phil's exit	Alarm clock special only		
3		Richard Enters USC	Fade to early morning	Early morning golden sunlight, very soft	
4		Richard shuts off clock	Lose clock special		
5		Richard draws curtains	Sunlight Pouring in	Early morning golden sunlight, very soft	
7.5	23	Richard 'disarms' Kenny	Synap Flash Intense	Flash through string light areas 1, 5, 6	
8.5		CL: "...physical or psychological trauma?"	Synap Flash Intense	Flash through string light areas 1, 5, 6	
9	29	Philip appears	Subtle mood shift	Dirty the sunlight a bit, add confusion	
10	32	Transition from bedroom to Phil's Car	Crossfade	Additional elements TBD	
21		Lights up on Claire and Philip in car	Morning sunlight	Tight isolation of car	
21.1	33	CL: "What happened to you"	Red Traffic Light		
21.2	33	CL: "I don't know if that's true"	Green Traffic Light		
21.3	N/A	Follow Cue	Fade out Traffic Light		
21.5	35	CL: "Mama's name is Gertie..."	Synap Flash Medium	Flash through string light areas 1, 5, 6	
21.6		Follow Cue	Restore Morning Car		
22.5	36	Claire hears carnival music	Synap Flash Medium	Flash through string light areas 1, 5, 6	
22.6		Follow Cue	Restore Morning Car		
23.1	37	Truck Horn blaring	Red Trailer Light	Attacks and decays quick.	
23.2	37	Truck Horn Fades	Lose Red Trailer Light		
30		Transition from Car to Gertie's Kitchen	Crossfade	Additional elements TBD	
31	38	Claire appears in window	Kitchen Morning	Window and ceiling light as source of light	
32	40	Phil: "privacy is priceless..."	Big tree	introduce tree to the scene.	
32.5	40	CL: "What a huge tree"	Synap Flash Medium	Flash through all areas	
33	41	Grt: "Balcony"	Emotion Shift	Phil's anger drives the look.	
34	42	CL: "You scared mama..."	Restore Kitchen Morning		
34.1	43	CL: "...saws hanging to the left"	Hacksaw special	Hacksaw special + Synap Flash Small	
35	43	Philip leaves to basement	Hint at basement	Ghost basement as to not lose Phil	
35.1	43	CL: "...daddy's cologne"	Flash Build 1		
35.2	43	CL: "...he wear a yellow cap"	Flash Build 2		
35.5	43	CL: "Hold on..."	A-HA Moment		
36	44	Hinky Binky appears	Brighten Window		
37	45	Philip Leaves basement	Drop all basement away		
38	50	Phil/Millet enter basement	Hint at basement	Ghost basement as to not lose Phil/Millet	
39	52	Phil: "You mention anything..."	Intensify Scene	Shift away from reality.	
39.1	52	Phil: "I'm sorry"	Restore Kitchen Morning	Anticipate cue.	
40	52	Transition to Richard's car	Crossfade	Additional elements TBD	
41	53	Richard's Car	Late Morning	Tight isolation of car	
42	56	R: "Did I ever tell you about the time..."	Police Flashers Fade In	Police flashers	
50	60	Transition to Basement	Noon Basement	bulbs and base level windows as sources	
51	61	Claire and Millet Enter			
51.1		Claire and Millet sit on stairs	Subtle Focus shift to stairs		
51.5	67	Claire hears barking	Synap Flash Intense		
51.6		Follow Cue	Restore Noon Basement		
52	68	CL: "Oh, You're sorry..."	Claire becomes creepy	Scene is cold and scary for Millet	
53	68	Claire pins Millet's arm	Isolate Workbench	Toplight and color fill around workbench	
54	69	Mil: "I can't"	Restore basement	Slow restore of Noon Basement	
54.5	70	Claire hears barking again	Synap Flash Medium		
54.6		Follow Cue	Restore Kitchen		
55	72	Claire and Philip kiss	Shift in mood	Suggest something odd is happening	
56	72	Restore after kiss	Restore previous		
60	73	Transition to Richard's car	Crossfade	Additional elements TBD	
61	73	Richard's Car	Noon	Tight isolation of car	
61.1	75	R: "I didn't see any camera"	Red Stoplight		
61.2	75	R: "...actually use that word"	Green Stoplight		
61.3	N/A	Follow Cue	Fade out Traffic Light		
70	79	Transition from Car to Gertie's Kitchen	Crossfade	Additional elements TBD	
71	80	Gertie's kitchen	Kitchen Noon	Window and ceiling light as source of light	
71.5	80	Claire hears dogs	A-HA Moment	Twinkle string lights to simulate thinking	
72	82	CL: "Ooo, Pictures"	Subtle focus shift to table		

APPENDIX J Sound Design

Fuddy Meers				
Sound Designer: Araceli Ramirez				
Director: Dustin Mosko				
Sound Cue Sheet				
Cue #	Page #	Sound/Description	Cue/Location	Designer Notes
1		Preshow Music		
1.2		fade projection fader	preparation for pre show blackout	
1.5		Creepy Phil sound	with lights when Phil creeps through	
2	19	Alarm clock	Open with lights	
2	19	Bedroom Ambience		
2.5	19	Stop alarm clock	Claire: I'm not sure	
3	23	Claire's Bad Memory	Richard: No! No! No!	
3.5	27	Claire's Bad Memory	Claire: "physical or psychocological trauma"	
4	29	Abrupt spooky sound	Phillip pops his head out	
5	32	Fade Bedroom Ambience	as soon as they walk towards the car	
6	32	Car ambience	as LM and Claire hit the carseat	
6.5	33	car hovering	with light cue 21.1	traffic light envisioned for this
6.8	34	car continues driving	with light cue 21.2	
7	36	Echoey carnival music	Limping Man: All right there are many things I can't explain right now.....	go until Q9
7.5	36	Fade Q6		
9	37	Trucker Horn&Fade	There! There!	Grouped Q
9	37	Car screech	There! There!	
11	37	Fade Q6	Claire: I'm not sure I can at this point, but I'll try	
	38		transition (as car is leaving)	
13	38	Country ambience	use as transition	
13	38	Fade Q7		
13.5	38	Phill's Spooky	Visual cue: when he pops up in the window	
14	40	AHA moment	Call with Lights 32.5	
15	43	AHA moment	Claire: There's a hacksaw with a red handle	
15	43	AHA moment	hold on GO there used to be cages out back	
15.5	52	Fade Q13		15.5 and 16 get grouped into 1
15.5		Basement ambience		
16	53		transition	
17	53	car ambience	open with scene	actors already in car when scene opens
18	53	Now		
18.1	53	Fade and stop Now		
18.2	53	radio fuzz- Heptapus	Kenny "I said I didn't need a ride"	
18.3	53	Fade and stop Heptapus		
18.4	53	radio fuzz- How Long Till	Richard: "hey blow it that way"	
18.5	53	Police Siren	Richard: Did I ever tell you about the time I met Dennis Hopper?	
18.8	53	radio fuzz- Death to Clouds	Richard changes the radio	
18.9	56	Car slow down	"Aw geez, it's the fuzz"	
18.9	56	Fade and stop 18.4		
19.1		Fade 18.5	whenever they start talking	
19.3	60	Fade Q17	end of scene	Grouped Q
20	60	transition	basement ambience	Autofollow 19.5
21	61	basement ambience		
22	67	faint dog bark	Claire: Look squirt gun... Gertie saved all of our toys	
23	68	Ominous sound	Claire: oh, you're sorry?	

23.5	68	Fade Q23	right as she takes the mask off	
24	70	Echoey dog bark, but louder	Millet: I don't know! I don't know anything!	make auto follow 24.5
24.5	70	fade Q 24		autofollow to 25
23.6	72	Bad idea sound	LM kisses her on the mouth	
23.5	73	fade ambience		
25	73	transition	radio tuning	
25.5	73	fade transition	when they are in	
26	73	road ambience	open scene	26 is grouped Q
26	73	radio playing- Death to Clouds	open scene	
26.5		fade and stop Death to Clouds	Heidi: "I don't wanna go to the fucking country."	
26.7	75	car at red light	Light cue 61.1	
26.8	75	car at green light	Light cue 61.2	
27	79	car swerve and screech	Heidi: ooooo	autofollow to 28
27		fade car ambience		
28	79	transition	country ambience	
29	80	country ambience	open with scene	
29	80	echoey bark	Gertie: I doan tink-toe!	30 is a grouped Q
30	80	AHA moment	right after Claire says Nancy!	
31	84	Echoey carnival music	Gertie: you doe mem ohta tins dah happy	
31.5	84	bacon sizzling	"should that ring any bells?"	
32	85	fade Q31	when the men approach	
33	88	aha moment	right before claire says "Zack Died" light cue 75.5	
33.2	94	when commotion begins		
33.5	94	PreGunFun	with lights when all the commotion goes down	
34	94	possible gun shot	Claire: Stoooooooooop iiiiiiiit!	
34.5	94	shell shock	following gun shot	
35	95	Echoey carnival music	Richard: Claire...	
35.5	95	fade carnival music	LM: Claire wath a nurth, she can help uth.	
36	102	AHA moment	Claire: Oh good	
37	102	transition	basement ambience	
38	112	shovel thwack	visual cue: gertie hitting millet in the head with shovel	
38	112	fade Q37	end of scene	
39	112	transition	Country ambience	
39.2	125	Bad Memory	this guy's my father	
39.5	120	bad memory	Claire: Richard Fille didn't beat me	
40	126	aha moment	Claire: and he falls back to sleep	
41	126	Bacon frying	Kenny: So I limp to the car	
41	126	Phillip Scream	Claire: and I dran the scalding bacon grease into his ear	
41.5	126	fade Q41	Kenny: but I can still hear that scream	
43	132	puppies yapping	LM: it wath, and we can go back there, get thome inner toooth, bug thpray	
43.5	132	fade Q43	Claire: someone who is so much like my father must be so good inside	
44	135	Carnival music	LM: you ungrateful cunt	
44.5	136	fade Q44	Claire: Kenny! I said stop! You're being like him!	
45	136	shovel thwack	Heidi: Help me, Phil!	
46	139	transition	Car ambience	
46.5	144	fade Q47	with blackout	15 second fade out
48		curtain call	at stage managers discretion	

APPENDIX K Rehearsal Schedule

September 2016						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6:30- Rehearsal (221) Full Read Thru 8:00- Vocal Rehearsal *Audio Recording **Vocal Coach invited at 6:30	2 6:30- Improvisation & Movement Rehearsal *Fight Director Invited @ 6:30	3
4 Dark! *Audio Recording Placed in Shared Box Account	5	6 5:30- Production Team Meeting (221) 6:30-Blocking Rehearsal (Studio) 6:45 A1S2 (CP) 7:30 A1S1(RCKP) 8:30 A1S4 (RKH) 9:30 A1S6 (RKH) *Rehearsal Props? *Tape Stage? *Car Layout	7 6:30-Blocking Rehearsal (Studio) A2S2 (RMG) 7:30- A1S3 (GCPM) 8:30- A1S5 (CMP)	8 6:30- Blocking Rehearsal (Studio) A2S4 (GCRK) 7:30- A2S3 (All - Millet) 8:30- A1,S7 (All Call) A2,S1 (All Call)	9 6:30- Improvisation & Movement Rehearsal (All Call) *Fight Director Invited @ 6:30 8:30pm- Vocal Rehearsal (All Call) *Vocal Coach Invited @8:30	10
11 6:30-Blocking Rehearsal (Studio) 6:45- Transitions-All Call 7:30- Run Show Blocking w/ Transitions	12	13 5:30- Production Team Meeting (221) 6:30-Rehearsal (Studio) All Call 7:00 Run Show Blocking w/ Transitions *Production Team Invited @ 7pm	14 6:30-Scene Study (Studio) 6:30- A1S2 (CP) 7:00- A1S3 (GCPM) 7:30- A1S5 (CMP) 8:00- A2S2 (RMG) 8:30- A2S4 (GCRK) 9:00- A1S1(RCKP) 9:30- A1S4 (RKH) A1S6 (RKH)	15 6:00-Film Shoot (TBA)-All Call minus Claire 8:00-Scene Study (Studio) A1S7 (All Call) A2S1 (All Call) 9:00- A2S3 (All - Millet) *Fight Director Invited @ 8pm	16 6:30-Rehearsal (Studio) 7:00- Full Run Through w/ Transitions *Last day to hold scripts. *Production Team Invited @ 7pm 8:30- ALL Call Vocal Rehearsal *Vocal Coach Invited at 7pm	17
18 6:30-Scene Study (Studio) A1S2 (CP) 7:00- A1S3 (GCPM) 7:30- A1S5 (CMP) 8:00- A2S4 (GCRK) 8:30- A1S1(RCKP) 9:00- A1S4 (RKH) 9:30- A1S6 (RKH)	19	20 5:30- Production Meeting (221) 6:30-Rehearsal (Studio) All Call-Fights 8:00- A1S7-A2S3 *Fight Director Invited @6:30	21 6:30-Rehearsal (Studio) Top-A1S6 (All Call)	22 6:30-Rehearsal (Studio) Curtain Call (ALL) 7:00- A1S7-Curtain (ALL)	23 6:30-Rehearsal (221) 6:30-All Call-Line Bash w/SM 7:00- *Vocal Coach Invited @ 6:30 6:45-Projection Meeting Pre-Tech (Studio)	24
25 6:30-Rehearsal (Studio) All Call 7:00- Top-A1S6	26	27 5:30- Production Meeting 6:30-Rehearsal	28 6:30-ALL CALL 7:00- Full Run Through (Start & Stops)	29 6:30-ALL CALL 7:00-Full Run Through- NO STOPS	30 6:00-ALL CALL *1ST TECH	
	(Start & Stops) *MINI TECH	(Studio) All Call 7:00- A1S7-Curtain (Start & Stops) *MINI TECH	*MINI TECH	*CREW PREVIEW		

October 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 1:00pm-ALL CALL Tech Rehearsal	3 6:00-ALL CALL Tech Rehearsal	4 6:00-ALL CALL Final Dress	5 6:00-ALL CALL 7:30- Preview Performance	6 6:00-ALL CALL 7:30-Opening Night Performance	7 6:00-ALL CALL 7:30- Performance	8 6:00-ALL CALL 7:30- Performance
9 Dark	10 TBA	11 6:00-ALL CALL 7:30- Performance	12 6:00-ALL CALL 7:30- Performance	13 6:00-ALL CALL 7:30- Performance	14 6:00-ALL CALL 7:30- Performance	15 6:00-ALL CALL 7:30- Performance
16 12:30-ALL CALL 2:00-Matinee Performance 4:00-Strike	17	18	19	20	21	22

Fuddy Meers | Rehearsal Schedule for Week of September 26th

Monday- 6:30pm Work Scenes with Fights 7:30pm Start & Stop Top through A1S6 8:45pm Run Top through A1S6 (No stops)
9:45pm Notes

Tuesday- 6:30pm Work Scenes with Fights
7:00pm Start & Stop A1S7 to Curtain Call 8:45pm Run A1S7-Curtain Call (No stops) 9:45pm Notes

Wednesday- 6:30pm Scene Work (TBA) 7:30pm Work Scenes with Fights 8:00pm Full Run Through (No Stops)
9:45pm Notes

Thursday- 6:30pm Scene Work (TBA) 7:30pm Work Scenes with Fights 8:00pm Full Run Through (No Stops)
9:45pm Notes

Friday- TECH!!

APPENDIX L Directing Journal

The Directing Process for *Fuddy Meers*

Dustin M. Mosko, MFA Directing Candidate
JCSTF '2016

- 8/24/16 Main Stage Auditions
- 8/25/16 Call Backs for *Fuddy Meers*
- 8/26/16 Met with Sasha Dobson (vocal coach) to establish a plan of action.
Met with Virginia to discuss casting options.
- 8/27/16 Casting Session- Cast List Posted on JCSTF Website
Projections Meeting with Zach Trout- Concept created for projections
- 8/29/16 Rehearsal#1- Meet & greet, rehearsal schedule distributed, Facebook group
created, 1st read through
- 8/30/16 Met with Riley Redburn about rehearsal process.
- Production#1- Box construction, scheduled costume fittings, refrigerator/freezer,
counter/sink, workbench, footlights, shovel, firing live blank from gun prop,
scheduled marketing/publicity photo & program information and events,
projections- discussed the need for car to vary speed to include a stop, concerns
expressed about height of projections on the stage interfering with actors ability
to stand during car scenes
Rehearsal#2- Director/Designer concept presentation, Designers invited to listen
in on the 2nd Read through
Staging Meeting- Director presented designers with concept for transitions on
the revolve
- 8/31/16 Rehearsal#3- Established play timeline, character development, relationships
- 9/1/16 Rehearsal#4- Vocal warm-ups, Cast recording of 3rd Read through placed on
Dropbox.
- 9/2/16 Rehearsal#5- Physical and vocal warm-ups, Viewpoints, special awareness
exercises, improvisation exercises
Met with Virginia for thesis advisement.
- 9/5/16 Labor Day- Dark

9/6/16 Production#2- Car prop's backseat should be taller than front, costume concept needs carnie flair, Box Concept? Hinky Binky needed ASAP, Curtain call music should be uplifting, consistent sound and light ambience needed to establish each setting, FOH wants 160 seats, film shoot scheduled for 9/15, gun prop problems tabled, shovel design tabled

Rehearsal#6- Block A1S1, A1S2, A1S4, A1S6

9/7/16 Rehearsal#7- Block A1S3, A1S5, A2S2

9/8/16 Rehearsal#8- Block A1S7, A2S1, A2S4

9/9/16 Met with Virginia for thesis advisement.
Met with UNL marketing to discuss social media strategies.
Rehearsal #9- Physical and vocal warm-ups, Viewpoints, character movement, improvisation exercises

9/12/16 Met with front of house staff to discuss lobby display & usher costumes.
Rehearsal#10- Blocked out fight choreography, stumble through show blocking

9/13/16 Production#3- Designers invited to run through on 9/16, no lighting needs, fittings scheduled, crickets from sound, bios due, #Fuddy decided upon, Projections test scheduled, gun prop repair scheduled, car/box design?, window bench seat will support standing, seated, and lying and have hinge to open to storage area big enough for actor to hide into
Rehearsal#11- Rebecca (costumes) given time with cast, rehearse A1S7-A1S4, run through of show minus car scenes (start & stop)

9/14/16 Met with Trey individually to work on character development for Philip.
Met with projection team for a test on a sample of the painted drop.
Rehearsal#12- Lisa (set & props) invited to collaborate on car scenes to assist design, ran car scenes, rehearsed stage combat with Harris and Julia (fight choreographers), ran A1S7-A2S4, director and SM notes followed

9/15/16 Pre-show Film Shoot (all cast minus Abbey)
Rehearsal#13- "Back to the book" read through (actors were to read word for word while performing the play in order to correct paraphrasing, open discussion about the play and characters with cast followed the b2b run through

9/16/16 Met with Virginia for thesis advisement.
Rehearsal#14- Designer Preview of *Fuddy Meers* performed in rehearsal space, actor notes from director and director/designer discussion followed the preview

9/19/16 Met with Virginia to receive feedback from Designer Preview on 9/16.
Rehearsal#15- Line-through vocal exercise A1S7-A2S3

9/20/16 Production#4- Show runs 90 minutes with no intermission, animation will be ready by 9/23, paper tech scheduled, show props are ready

Rehearsal#16- Move into performance space, Brendan (TD) addresses safety concerns and set function, Harris & Julia lead fight choreography rehearsal, block A1S1, A1S3, A1S4, A1S6, A1S7, A2S3, A2S4 onto stage proper

9/21/16 Met with Sheric to discuss lighting design specifics.
Replaced Jack with Michael (Kenny) due to school policy infraction.
Rehearsal#17- Polish A1S1, A1S3, A1S4, A1S6 (minus Kenny)

9/22/16 Rehearsal#18- Block Michael into Kenny scenes A1S1, A1S2, A1S4, A1S6, A1S7, A2S1, A2S3, A2S4
Michael fitted for Kenny costumes

9/23/16 Met with Virginia for thesis advisement.
Met with TD about the revolve & roll drape.
Rehearsal#19- Work Kenny scenes, Julia blocks Michael into fight choreography, line bash with Michael and cast

9/26/16 Rehearsal#20- Physical & Vocal warm ups as a group, Julia leads fight call, ran fights at show speed, ran A1S1-A1S6 with fights (start and stops)

9/27/16 Production #5- Wrap up of technical issues, designer updates, show build status, reshoot for Kenny (preshow) details, request for all show props by tech.
Rehearsal#21- Physical & Vocal warm ups as a group, Julia leads fight call, ran fights at show speed, ran A1S7-A2S4 with fights (start and stops) in the space.

9/28/16 Met with projection team to preview the images in the space on the drop.
Reshoot for Michael to be place Kenny into the preshow display.
Rehearsal#22- Introduce car prop, run car scenes, full run through, director & SM notes

9/29/16 Paper Tech#1- Preshow through A1S5
Rehearsal#23- Polish A1S5 & A2S2, Physical & vocal warm ups as a group, fight call, full run through with fights and car prop

9/30/16 Paper Tech#2- A1S6-Curtain call

	Radio Interviews & taught an OLLI Class as a marketing tool and community outreach from JCSTF
10/1/16	Tech#1- Revolve introduced, futile attempt to work transitions as conceptualized Went back to the drawing board and conceptualized all transitions based on set and crew capabilities
10/2/16	Tech#2- Cue to cue Preshow through A2S1 with new transition concept
10/3/16	Speaking engagement for Intro the Theatre for Fuddy preview Tech #3- Cue to cue A2S2 through curtain call with new transition concept, 1 st Dress Rehearsal (without make-up), SM & directors notes for actors and tech
10/4/16	2 nd Dress with make-up and hair, SM & directors notes for actors and tech
10/5/16	Met with projection team to finalize the projections. Final Dress, Audience Preview, SM & directors notes for actors and tech
10/6/16	Opening Night
10/7/16	KCACTF response after the run.

1. Lincoln Journal Star News Review**Review: 'Fuddy Meers' a strong start to UNL theater season**

CINDY CONGER for the Lincoln Journal Star

Oct 6, 2016

The UNL theater season opened Thursday night with the dark, twisty comedy “Fuddy Meers,” on stage at the Studio Theatre.

Director Dustin Mosko staged a seamless, textured production of the script written by David Lindsay-Abaire. The story revolves around Claire, played by Abbie Austin. Claire appears kindhearted and happy, but a rare form of amnesia erases her memory every time she falls asleep. She relies on husband Richard, played by Hunter Mruz, to remind her who she is each morning.

But something doesn’t quite add up. Claire is kidnapped by the Limping Man, played by Trey Martinez. As the drama unfolds, memories and motives come to light.

All seven members of the ensemble delivered strong performances. UNL alumna Cecilia Burkhart took on the challenging role of Gertie, a stroke victim. She delivered difficult lines with precision, believability and compassion. Other notable performances were delivered by Michael Barth as Claire’s son Kenny and Nick Prior as Millet.

2. Professor Virginia Smith Response

Professor Virginia Smith's Response to

Dustin Mosko's Thesis Production: *Fuddy Meers* by David Lindsay-Abaire

These comments are based on areas of focus throughout the preproduction, rehearsal and performance process. As I've told you, I enjoyed the performance and believe that your production was very successful.

Play selection: I always thought this was an excellent play for you to do. In my opinion it is a much more interesting than the others you proposed.

Script Analysis: Quite effective. It's a tricky play. It has moments of slapstick comedy and lots of jokes, broken people with serious disabilities, tenderness, violence, self-discovery, and love. I think you found most them. I was rather astonished to hear that you missed the Rodney King reference and that you hadn't researched a Filofax, since the rest of your research seemed spot on. Your production presented these characters and this odd little story in a very entertaining and affirming way. It's a difficult script because it can be just a comedy without deeper aspects. I believe we both think that it is more than that. Finding that balance is the area where I still have some questions.

Concept: Putting the production in the Studio Theatre was an excellent challenge for you. I know the concept placing the production in a kind of carnival/fun house setting was discovered through collaboration with your designers, and I think some aspects of the decision worked well and others not as much. In discussions with my students, some of them were confused. Though many people loved the opening video, it also was not really a prologue that ushered the audience into the play, so much as it ushered them into the concept. This left some audience members wondering when and how the preshow characters would show up again. So on one hand the preshow video was fun and useful in providing information, it was also a bit misleading. The set was lovely. I've heard it called one of the most beautiful sets in several years. I agree, but the play itself and the audience's understanding of it, was not particularly enhanced by the set. For example, Gertie's kitchen was so drab; it seemed almost like the interior of a warehouse. The set dressing didn't help in this area at all either. Nor did the costumes fit into your concept. I know the revolve was key to the cinematic scene changes that were required in your concept and in the pacing of the show. It ultimately worked very well.

Auditions/callbacks: These were handled very well. The callbacks were effective and efficient.

Casting:

You made good choices in casting the roles in *Fuddy Meers*, based on who we have in our program. Using Cecilia Burkhart as Gertie was certainly the right choice. Her professionalism

and positivity helped the build a solid ensemble. Her acting was the most realistic in the production, and seemed to a good grounding factor. It would have been interesting to see her playing just a little more broadly, but she was solid. All the students were correctly cast. I can't imagine anyone doing Claire but Abbie Austin, because she is inherently sunny. You didn't have many choices for the Limping man, but Trey Martinez seemed best suited for this difficult role and he did well in it.

Staging:

The set wasn't either acting or staging friendly. It was a challenge to grapple with its idiosyncrasies, and to your credit you kept trying to make adjustments up until opening. You mostly did proscenium staging, which tended to be a little flat and required the actors to try to open up more than they could always motivate. Several just didn't or couldn't do it. You were always willing to listen to my notes on staging and always worked to come up with something of your own to fix the problems. Possibly using more thrust techniques would have added more dimensionality to the staging. Keep working to develop a sense of what works and the courage to keep searching for the best solution.

Working with actors:

I enjoyed watching you work with the actors. Any leadership and respect problems that were assessed in previous projects seem to have been completely eliminated. You developed a tight ensemble that seemed to be totally invested in the process and enjoyed your work together. Looking at the rehearsal reports, I feel you could have spent more time rehearsing. I know I would have rehearsed this show more, if I had directed it. I understand that the performance grew/changed quite a lot in performance. There is certainly much to be learned from an audience, but you will have to assess if it grew in the way you had built into the production. If not, more rehearsal would help to do that.

Pacing:

The pacing ultimately worked very well. The turntable offered a fresh and effective solution to scene changes, and the show had a good variety of tempos.

Acting:

The performances were strong in *Fuddy Meers*. Your work with the actors was effective and they seemed proud of their work and engaged in the ensemble. The balance of brokenness with comedy is the really tough part of this play. I think you did what you intended to do with the production. Most of your actors focused more on the comedy than the struggle. Hunter and Abby didn't seem to need to work to stay sunny in these rather desperate situations. They also gave some line readings that were designed to get the laugh, but at the expense of revealing more dimension in their characters. More realistic struggle would have added depth to the

production. I wonder if it would have been more emotionally affecting and nearly as funny if the actors weren't going for the jokes. It might have even been funnier.

Vocal work:

Even though you had a vocal coach, the cast wasn't always effective in enunciating clearly and simply being heard. I find that I have to be constantly vigilant with notes on articulation and projection, sometime even redoing scenes with that as the primary focus. The "stroke" language and the "lisp" work was effectively done.

Movement:

The actor's movement was good and the combat was effective. As I've already noted the blocking was rather flat. The students in our program are such good movers; you might have taken even more advantage of that. Push yourself to use even more variety and surprise in your movement work.

Conflict:

The conflict was built effectively.

Climax:

This was also handled effectively.

Cohesiveness:

Your concept was effectively explored in the lighting, the sound and the look of the set. I liked the use of carnival music and spinning lights, and these elements were overall useful in advancing the plot. The costumes, props, and set dressing didn't fit well with your concept, nor did they help us much in understanding who and where the characters were. Did you ever talk about carnival elements or color in the costumes, or midway colors in the décor? Or using the distortions of lines in the interiors to reference the distortions the mirrors? In my two discussions with students in my classes, they understood the carnival concept easily, but got confused when they couldn't see how the very drab interior was part of a carnival and why the concept never added meaning. Something I believe is necessary.

Making and meeting deadlines:

You did well in this area. The fact that many elements were not only given to you late, but often a surprise when they landed, wasn't your problem.

Effectiveness of rehearsal schedule:

It seemed to work, even with replacement of an actor late in the process.

Collaboration with designers and mentors:

I'm not sure if the collaboration was effective or if you ended up accepting ideas and concepts because you felt you had to. Maybe I missed some key production meetings. That balance is so critical. What areas of collaboration didn't work as you had hoped and why? I hope you will discuss them in your thesis.

I don't know why it is so difficult to get buy-in from a set designer that you want to use media in the production. Scenic fought you every step of the way. I thought the use of a pre-show worked very well. I'm not sure the content was as useful as just the spirit of it. It certainly introduced the characters and gave out vital preshow information and for that kudos. I'm just not sure if the audiences knew why these characters actually weren't a part of the plot. The animation on the road was less successful, for me partly because of the stripes on the curtain, again, an inability of the scenic area to actually cooperate with other elements. But it's flavor helped to support the uninspired look of the car and its necessity to rotate back and forth so monotonously.

Leadership:

Good, within the strictures of our department.

Effectiveness during tech rehearsals:

You were very patient during technical rehearsals. You remained respectful and trusted in the "higher powers" to bring everything together in time. My only suggestion would be that you be more cognizant of time. You spent a long time rehearsing the curtain call, for example, when there were many more important issues to address in that time. Curtain calls can be worked out before hand and really only take a moment to teach to the cast. Your choice to have an assistant taking your notes meant that you stayed in one place and missed some of the problems that were only seen from other seats. Time management is of the essence during techs, though you did well, there is room for improvement in this area.

Problem solving:

Good, again within the strictures of the department.

Collaboration with producers:

I spoke to Brad and Julie and they agree you were exemplary in this area.

Working with rules budgets and policies:

No problems here. Also, see above.

Effectiveness during the run:

I saw *Fuddy Meers* through technical rehearsals and then on opening night. I understand that it grew a lot in the run. Your stage manager got notes from you to pass to the students, which is completely appropriate in keeping up the performance.

Here are my answer to the questions you presented.

1. Did the design concept work with the performance and the script?

I've touched on some of these issues above. I think your concept was interesting and intriguing. However, the inconsistent aspects of it caused some confusion in our audiences. The question that wasn't asked often enough seems to be: "what does that mean?" The carnival concept worked up to a point, but did not appear in the set dressing, the props, or the costumes and didn't add to the meaning of the performance or the script. Sometimes it was forced on the script and sometimes we were asked to suspend out disbelief because it wasn't being incorporated in this moment.

The audiences still received your production with enthusiasm and enjoyed the characters and the story. I've heard numerous positive comments from students as well as the general public. The energy and quirkiness of the pre-show, combined with the beauty of the set was an excellent warm-up for the show. But it also set up expectations that weren't necessarily delivered.

2. Was the story clear?

Yes, I believe it was.

3. Was the show's pace effective in maintaining the audience's attention?

Yes. It worked well.

4. Did the cast, crew and audience appear safe at all time?

Sometimes I'd see the actor flash a moment of worry as they began the flight down to the lower level. But it appeared safe to me.

5. Was the play effectively staged for the Studio Theatre's seating configuration?

The extreme edges had limited views of some of the action. You kept working to make it the best it could be.

6. Did the actors appear confident and portray believable characters?

The actors seemed confident and delighted to take us on our journey. Something I really appreciated. The characters were very believable unless they sacrificed it for a laugh.

7. Did this production achieve the expectations of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film?

Yes.

8. Is there anything of note you'd specifically like to include with this thesis document?

I hope you include a section on what you learned from the process, and what you would change if you could go back in time to do so.

3. Professor Del Delorm Critical Response

October 17, 2016

To whom it may concern,

I attended Dustin Mosko's directed production of *Fuddy Meers* at University of Nebraska Lincoln on October 9th, 2016. Overall, I thought that this was an extremely well done production and that Dustin's direction was exemplary. Below, I have answered a series of guided questions about my experience.

Did the design concept work with the performance and script?

I thought that the design concept worked extremely well for the script and performance. Many times, productions can get stuck in realism or selective realism, when modern scripts call for much more symbolism and breaks from reality. Mr. Mosko's choice to place everything in a carnival tent set the expectations of the audience early and strongly, and it was carried through the entire design. I did not see any elements that were anachronistic to the world of the play. The script itself is surreal and symbolic, and the design, especially the set, went hand in glove with the playwright's words.

Was the story clear?

The story was very clear, well-articulated, and executed with finesse. This script has the potential to be confusing, considering its mystery component, but clearly defined characterizations kept all the relationships from becoming muddled beyond the playwright's intentions to obscure the truth.

Was the show's pace effective in maintaining the audience's attention?

At no point did this show feel like it was lagging or dragging. The multi-level stage I feel helped keep things flowing, allowing scene changes to move quickly and kept lulls in the action from occurring.

Did the cast, crew and audience appear safe at all times?

Yes. Even during the fight scene on a very small upper platform.

Was the play effectively staged for the Studio Theatre's seating configuration?

I would say yes. I am partial to the corner-thrust arrangement in black boxes. The danger is always that the extreme edges of the seating might have some actor sightline issues, but this play moved quickly enough that no characters were stationary for long, eliminating that problem.

Did the actors appear confident and portray believable characters?

Yes. Everyone was well past the point of just delivering their lines, and most were deep into characterization and action choices. Very clear character choices had been made, and

some of their changes from one situation to the next were startlingly quick and effective. If any criticism can be offered, it is that the actors could have pushed their emotional responses even further than they did. This is not to say that they were lackluster, only that they had a bit of room to push their character's internal emotions more into the external embodiment of their actions and reactions.

Did this production achieve the expectations of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film?
I believe so.

Is there anything of note you'd specifically like to include with this thesis document?

The UNL Graduate Program consistently produces good theatre, but I feel that this particular production has achieved more highly than average. Often times, we can describe student productions as good, "but..." and then list a weakness that clearly detracted from the production. I do not feel that is the case here. There were no obvious flaws. There were no clear weak spots. The entire production felt polished, complete, and unified. Any criticisms that I can offer on Mr. Mosko's work would be nit picking, would have more to do with the skill level of some of his cast and crew, and would not be an accurate reflection of those elements over which he had complete control. He created an excellent production with the resources available to him, and one cannot expect more than that. Given a completely professional cast, crew, and designers, I expect Mr. Mosko to lead very high quality productions worthy of praise and patronage.

Del DeLorm
Senior Lecturer, University of Nebraska Kearney

4. Dr. William Grange Critical Response

Did the design concept work with the performance and script?

Yes—largely because of the distorted world in which most of the action takes place. Since a lot of the action takes place unseen in the backstage basement area, however, there needed to be a more distorted entrance to the backstage area. The stage revolve looked a little like a luggage carousel as a result.

Was the story clear?

Yes—but the story is about mistaken identities rather than amnesia or the effects of a stroke. Both Claire and Gertie serve mostly for comic effect. Their misapprehensions are funny, but they have little to do with the plot. The “story,” such as it is, is about the Limping Man’s enduring love for his former wife Claire and the extremes to which he is prepared to go. The subplot of Millet and his sufferings of sodomy, which led him to take up puppetry, was also significant.

Was the show’s pace effective in maintaining the audience’s attention?

The pace was superb—thanks largely to the performances of Mikey Barth (whatever happened to Jack Schoeberl?) and Nick Pryor.

Did the cast, crew, and audience appear safe at all times?

Nobody should give a shit about safety. Audience exits are clearly marked. Actors, on the other hand, need to appear like they are about to self-destruct at any moment. There should to be a perception of real danger in every production. For example, there needed to be a device to make the shovel “clang,” as it struck Aguel Lual’s head and knocked her out cold. She needed then to stagger around, then fall onto the staircase.

Was the play effectively staged for the Studio Theatre’s seating configuration?

The Studio Theatre is not a good space, though this production made use of it as well as any production I have seen since about 2010.

Did the actors appear confident and portray believable characters?

They all seemed well-rehearsed, though some had trouble with laugh lines. They paused too long, hoping perhaps to appear “realistic.” This play is not realistic, which most of them seem to realize. Let’s face it: none of these characters are believable—that’s what made the production so good. Aguel Lual was bewildered as to what was going on most of the time, however.

Did this production achieve the expectations of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film?

Yes—I was delighted to see very little axe-grinding in the production. That is especially true of Heidi, who came off as a complete dolt, a true outsider.

Is there anything of note you'd specifically like to include with this thesis document?

The use of the stage revolve was perhaps overdone. Yet the only alternative to using it three times was a backdrop that actively depicting travel on a roadway, with chairs used as abstracted seats in the vehicle. The first time the car unit appeared, it worked beautifully. But its effectiveness lessened with each appearance. I thought about its ineffectiveness after about the 40th time that little car unit swept across the revolve. And why that goofy steering wheel?

5. Professor Wesley Broulik Response

Did the design concept work with the performance and script?

Yes.

Was the story clear?

Yes.

Was the show's pace effective in maintaining the audience's attention?

Yes.

Did the cast, crew and audience appear safe at all times?

Yes.

Was the play effectively staged for the Studio Theatre's seating configuration?

Yes.

Did the actors appear confident and portray believable characters?

Yes.

Did this production achieve the expectations of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film?

Yes.

Is there anything of note you'd specifically like to include with this thesis document?

No.

-Wesley Broulik

6. Judy Hart Response

Did the design concept work with the performance and script? **Ultimately yes. As I sat waiting for the play to begin, I enjoyed the video and the circus theme, and wondered how it was going to connect me to the action of the play. Ultimately what happened was the world of the production was already in action from the time I entered the Studio Theatre which made the experience richer.**

Was the story clear? **Yes. I especially liked the sparseness of the action and tech that supported the story. I always knew where to look and what was most important.**

Was the show's pace effective in maintaining the audience's attention? **Yes. I especially liked the silences that were created. I thought the actors (and director) understood the outside in style of this Storytelling. No one was self-indulgently chewing up the scenery. They were all living happily within the confines of the imaginary circumstances and style of the production. I really liked the light/sound effect when memory surfaced for Claire.**

Did the cast, crew and audience appear safe at all times? **Yes, I never felt anyone was in danger although there was lots of danger in the action of the play.**

Was the play effectively staged for the Studio Theatre's seating configuration? **Yes. I had peeked into the space during the build and thought the scenic structure seemed large for the space, but not so in production. It worked well with the seating. The video worked well with the driving.**

Did the actors appear confident and portray believable characters? **Yes.**

Did this production achieve the expectations of the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film? **Not sure but it was a well done complete production which should achieve the expectations of the school.**

Is there anything of note you'd specifically like to include with this thesis document? **The repetitive movement of the driving got a little tedious toward the end of the production.**

Appendix N Production Photographs











